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China

O U R I S M



**LOOKING FOR
SHANGRI-LA**

**SUMMER ESCAPES
AROUND BEIJING**

A SKY OF KITES IN WEIFANG

NINGBO — THE EAST CHINA SEA CITY

215

ISSN 1025-577X



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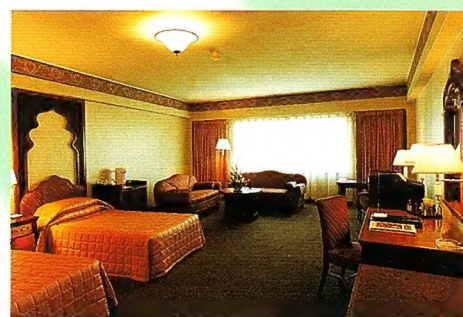
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主樓 Exterior



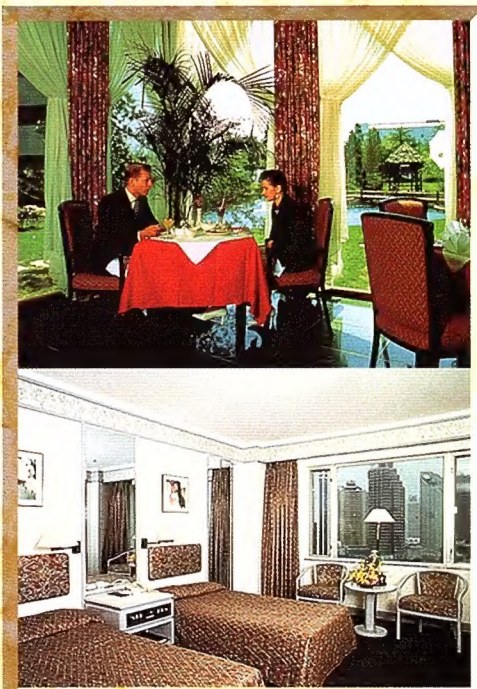
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HIGHLIGHTS

Three Summer Vacation Sites Out of Beijing

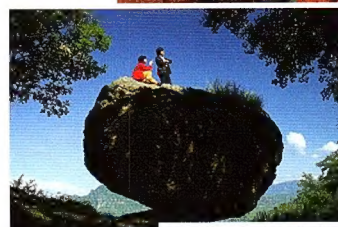
Photos & article by Shan Xiaogang

If the historical sites and scenic spots in Beijing are no longer new to you, we recommend here three tourist routes out of the capital, in Hebei Province: Beidaihe, a famous summer resort in northern China; Mulan Grassland which used to be the Qing royal family's hunting ground; and Yesanpo with clear waters and quiet valleys. These are the most popular summer escapes of Beijing people.



FROM THE EDITOR

Hunting for the Dreamland



SPECIALITIES

Black Cuisine – Tasty Ant Dishes

Photos & article by Shan Xiaogang



LANDSCAPES

A Boundary Waterfall

Photos & article by Chan Yat Nin

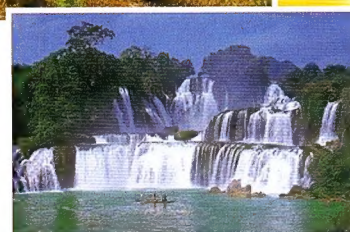
When the Guichun River runs through the Sino-Vietnamese border, the magnificent Detian Waterfall is created. A tour to this area will provide you with splendid scenes of the waters viewed from both the Chinese and Vietnamese sides.



SHOPPING

An Antiques Night Market in Chengdu

Photos & article by Huang Yanhong



FOCUS

An Australian Woman Marries in China

Photos & article by Xie Guanghui

NOVELTIES

A World of Strange Rocks

Photos & article by Xie Jianbo

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SHANXI TIANLI ENTERPRISE CO., LTD.



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DISCOVERIES

Into the World Called Shangri-La

Photos & article by Xie Guanghui

Dèqên in the remote boundary area of Sichuan, Yunnan and Tibet is believed by many to be the real Shangri-La depicted in the novel *Lost Horizon* by James Hilton. On the grassland surrounded by snowy mountains, the Tibetans maintain their religious culture and enjoy a life of tranquillity and harmony.



SPECIAL TOURS

A Sky of Kites

Photos & article by Shan Xiaogang

Weifang in Shandong Province is famous for kites. In its museum are displayed the best of kites from both ancient and modern times. During the annual international kite competition, kite flyers from all over the world gather there to show their works – some weighing 3,000 kilograms, some being small enough to fit into a matchbox.



CITY PROFILE

Ningbo – A Vibrant City by the East China Sea

Photos by Shi Baoxiu Article by Gloria Shang

Ningbo in Zhejiang Province is an ancient cultural city and one of the ports forced to open to Western powers after the Opium War. The city is taking off in economic development and is expected to become one of the four major international ports in the mainland of China.

HONG KONG

A Break on Lamma Island

Photos & article by So Long Chi



Shan Xiaogang

Cover: "Tigers" Walking in the sky of Weifang

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Tibetan Christians in a Yunnan Village

Photos & article by Jim Goodman

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FROM THE EDITOR

HUNTING FOR THE DREAMLAND

Shangri-La — the heart of fairy-tales, myths, fantasies... The name has attracted hundreds of thousands of people to India, Nepal, and the Tibet Autonomous Region of China in the search to find the perfect dreamland of their minds. To some it has become a passion.

People everywhere are rushing to announce their discovery of the real "Shangri-La".

These places are all beautiful, quiet, simple, and solitary indeed, but are all of different locations. How could this have happened?

Shangri-La is actually the Utopia in all kinds of fairy-tales and its location depends on the writers of fiction. Writers create their own dreamland; readers search for their own "real" Utopia according to their own imagination; hence, many possible versions of Shangri-La have surfaced.

Stepping out of the daily routine to travel around is very similar to hunting for Shangri-La. We all have different ideas of what constitutes beautiful scenery, and so, will likely choose different destinations for our own Shangri-La. One of our reporters has also joined the ranks in the hunt. He trekked up the Dégéng Plateau in Yunnan and reached a secluded villa hidden deep in a valley. Is this the Shangri-La in your mind?

Photo by Yang Feiyu





L A N D S C A P E S

Photos & article by Chan Yat Nin

A



BOUNDARY WATERFALL

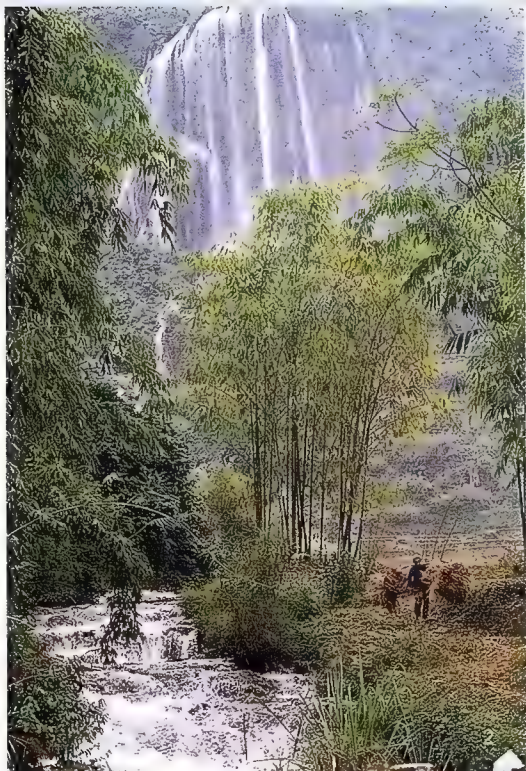


he Guichun River flows by Daxin, a county which sprawls along the southwestern border of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, and marks the boundary between China and Vietnam. The Detian Waterfall in this area has been called the "Number One International Waterfall in Asia". Whether true or not, the Detian Waterfall is a geographical marvel that has never failed to draw wondrous sighs from all who have been lucky enough to visit the site.

On a late autumn day we set off from Nanning, and when we arrived at Detian near Shuolong Town at the end of a six-hour drive, dusk was already falling. The sun had just dropped below the horizon, and in the fading twilight we could barely see a patch of gleaming whiteness amidst the dark smudge of mountains in the distance. Staying for the night in a holiday villa perched high up on a cliff, we all fell into deep slumber before long despite the hushed roaring of the waterfall down below.

Early the next morning we followed the mountain trail directly down to the great waterfall. The grass along the trail was luxurious, and damp with morning dew. From the top of the cliff that forms the Detian Waterfall's southeastern edge, we could see the Guichun River slashing and chopping its way down from the north. When the water hits head-on into the vertical cliff wall of Putang Islet, it splits up into numerous foamy rapids that spill over the cliff and plunge into a 40-metre abyss. As the massive water flow crashes into the solid rock below, it sends up





clouds of spray, enveloping the entire area in a thick pall of fog.

We walked down the mountain slope covered with terraced fields. The nearer we drew to the waterfall, the louder the flow and splash of the water became, and the more breathtaking the scenery grew. By the time we reached the bottom of the ravine, we found ourselves drenched in an apparent unceasing drizzle. Craning our heads and looking upwards, we had the feeling of being swept away by the power of the cascading water. Suddenly, in the midst of the thickening mist, we saw a rainbow swaying through the water spray. Water droplets dangled and splashed in the morning sun like shining pearls.

1. The Guichun River in autumn – terraced fields turn golden with ripening rice
2. A cataract found in Sandieling Mountain in Jingxi County
3. The side show of Detian Waterfall, though less majestic than the main section, is a beautiful sight in its own right.





The Detian Waterfall stretches out over 100 metres, but it is divided into numerous cascades that feed in from the northern, eastern and western sections to form a U-shaped trough. Some merge into a thundering current, while others remain separate as they pitch down the ravine. The cliff surface cuts the waterfall into three layers, creating multiple patterns as the deluge of water rushes down in a picturesque disorder. We immediately clicked our cameras away, collecting a wealth of panoramic views and vivid close-ups, all the while carefully protecting our equipment from the pervasive drizzle. Gradually, we saw tourists emerge from under the waterfall. Some of them boarded bamboo rafts which took them up as close as possible to the cascading waters. Some even braved the chill of late autumn and plunged into the water for a quick dip.

While the Guichun River serves as the boundary between China and Vietnam, the Detian Waterfall is shared by both countries. The bamboo rafts loaded with sightseers are allowed to drift to the Vietnamese side of the river, where a cluster of cataracts cascades down in a side show to the Detian Waterfall. If the large break between these two parts of the waterfall was continuously fed with water, then the Detian Waterfall would become a unique geographical phenomenon with a spectacular width of 200 metres. Given the caprices of nature, this is not an improbable proposition – but in which century we cannot say.

Actually, in the rainy season new cataracts sometimes do appear in between the two sections of the waterfall. On this late autumn day, even though the Guichun River was not at its most abundant flow, the Detian Waterfall was already a captivating sight. We imagined the summer scene, when the river swells up powerfully – what a magnificent, raging waterfall that would be!



Translated by Ling Yuan



1. The Detian Waterfall tumbles down to the trough below from many directions in unpredictable patterns.
2. The cataract on the Vietnamese side of the river swells to magnificent proportions during the rainy season.



HIGHLIGHTS

Photo: © Annie Fox, Xinhua

Three Summer Vacation Sites

OUT OF BEIJING

Beijing in summer is as hot as a furnace; the extreme heat makes people dizzy and wet with sweat. People who cannot tolerate the temperature often flee the city. Where do they go to escape the heat? To the beach in the east, Beidaihe, to the Bashang Grassland in the north and to the mountains and valleys in the southwest. These three ideal vacation sites are not far from Beijing, all in today's Hebei Province, which was formerly included in Jingji (Capital & Surrounding Area) in the Qing Dynasty.



East Line



Beidaihe & Nandaihe

With numerous summer resorts, the area is nicknamed "Summer Capital"

I took an express train leaving Beijing, heading east and it was already noon before I arrived at Qinhuangdao. Not in the least bit curious about the city by the sea in which

Qinshihuang (the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty) searched for the medicine of immortality, I joined the crowd in a rush to hire a car to get to the beach.

Beidaihe, well-known as a summer seaside resort in China, deserves its reputation. During peak season, the number of traffic officers has to be increased to cope with the deluge. There are trees and flowers everywhere, and visitors swarming the neat and tidy streets. Haibin Street was the most impressive, lined on both sides with trees and flowers. Chinese and Western style villas were built among the trees, with green slopes connecting down to the golden beach. A fresh breeze gently sailed

through the trees, cooling me down considerably before I jumped into the sea.

Since all the hotels close to the sea were fully booked, I had to rely on the taxi driver's help to find a place to spend the night.

Before dawn, the hotel manager woke me up, and I took a bus directly to Geziwo (Doves' Nest). Then I began to climb



Hejiaoshi (Shrieking Crane Stone); looking around it was obvious that thousands of visitors had arrived much earlier. They occupied every available site — the cape, beside the reefs, inside and outside the pavilions, the beaches — shadows everywhere. We all sat quietly waiting, facing one direction. This is the famous spot for capturing the spectacular sunrise.

First came a delicate red filling the sky in the east, and then the colour flamed vibrantly, only to return to a pale brightness. As the golden red sun popped up out of the sea, the sunrise watchers started to come alive with excitement. Like a chorus having received a signal from the conductor, we all cheered with one voice as the sun spread its golden rays over the sea. When the sun was high in the sky, I left Geziwo and drove to the Golden Beach, and from there I went sand tobogganing.

Previous page: Mulan Hunting Ground in summer

1. Watching sunrise at the Golden Beach in Beidaihe
2. Braving the waves at Nandaihe
3. Getting ready for a ride in a speedboat
4. Beach-goers enjoy themselves in various ways on the Nandaihe Beach





A cable car took me to the top of a sand hill parallel to the beach. Looking west, I saw an infinite expanse of sand, and over to the east, a vast sea. The sensations I experienced were totally different from similar types of activities inland. The slide down was so fast that I closed my eyes; when the toboggan stopped sliding, I opened my eyes to find the gorgeous blue sea a short distance away. It seemed that if the toboggan had gone any faster, I might have flown into the water.

At Golden Beach, there are plenty of activities to entertain yourself: the water slide, speed boat tours, sea-skiing, or a scenic flight for a bird's eye view of the entire area.

At noon, with a blazing sun overhead, I arrived at Nandaihe, known as the "No. 1 Bathing Beach Under Heaven". This twelve-mile-long beach had become the sun seekers zone, full with sun umbrellas and holiday makers. Everyone was involved in some activity — swimming, building sand castles, boating, ball games, and anything else they could think of. The immense number of visitors on the beach took me by surprise. Walking along the beach, it was hard to avoid stepping on people "buried" in the sand; a movement in the sand might make you think sea crabs were crawling out, but instead it was a pair of shifting sunburned feet. In curiosity I hired a sun umbrella and a tyre tube as a pillow, and buried myself completely; it was so soothing an experience that I had a wonderful sleep in the warm sand.

In the late afternoon, I sat up high on the watch tower in the Laohushi (Tiger Stone) Park of Beidaihe. Everything below

1. A view of the most favoured Beidaihe Beach
2. Not a crab
3. Dinner tables are laid on the Tiger Stone Beach at dusk.
4. Posing for a picture at Shanhaiguan Pass



Tourist Information:

■ **Touring:** Shanhaiguan Pass, also called East Gate, is 15 kilometres east of Qinhuangdao on the historical frontier of the Central Plains; the calligraphy on its tower reads: "First Pass Under Heaven". In addition to the Pass Tower that offers a great view of this important historical and cultural area, and the City Walls, there is a Great Wall Museum to visit in the city. Laolongtou (Old Dragon Head), five kilometres south of the pass, is the eastern beginning of the Ming Dynasty Great Wall, which connects with the sea, and is well worth visiting.

In the Qinhuangdao city proper, there are two places of interest — the harbour where Qinshihuang looked for immortals, and the sea sports centre.

The Wildlife Zoo between the city proper and Beidaihe is now the largest of its kind in China. It holds 3,000 wild animals of more than 100 species including some fierce carnivores.

■ **Transport:** There are three convenient tourist trains a day from Beijing to Qinhuangdao. From Beidaihe railway station, the No. 5 bus goes to beach. There are also luxury air-conditioned long-distance buses journeying between Beijing and Qinhuangdao, requiring about 4 to 5 hours.

There are public buses connecting Shanhaiguan, Qinhuangdao and Nandaihe, and Beidaihe. Mini-buses are frequent between Nandaihe, Beidaihe and Golden Beach. There are public buses between Shanhaiguan and Laolongtou.

■ **Lodging:** Most hotels at Beidaihe are open to the public with standard room rates around 400 yuan; Jingshan Hotel at Shanhaiguan: 180 yuan; Lantian Hotel at Golden Beach: 300 yuan; Huangyaguan Hotel: 180 yuan.

■ **Food:** All types of seafood are the big attraction at Beidaihe.

■ **Shopping:** Shell carving, shell knickknacks, coral and dried seafood.

■ **Suggested Itinerary:** Three-day tour:

Day 1: In the morning take the train or bus to Qinhuangdao; in the afternoon visit Shanhaiguan Pass and Old Dragon Head; stay overnight at Shanhaiguan.

Day 2: In the morning visit the place where Qinshihuang looked for immortality, and the Wildlife Zoo; in the afternoon visit Beidaihe and swim; stay overnight at Beidaihe.

Day 3: Get up at 4:00 a.m. to watch the sunrise at Geziwo; in the morning visit Golden Beach-Nandaihe, go sand tobogganing and swimming; in the afternoon return to Beidaihe and then to Beijing.

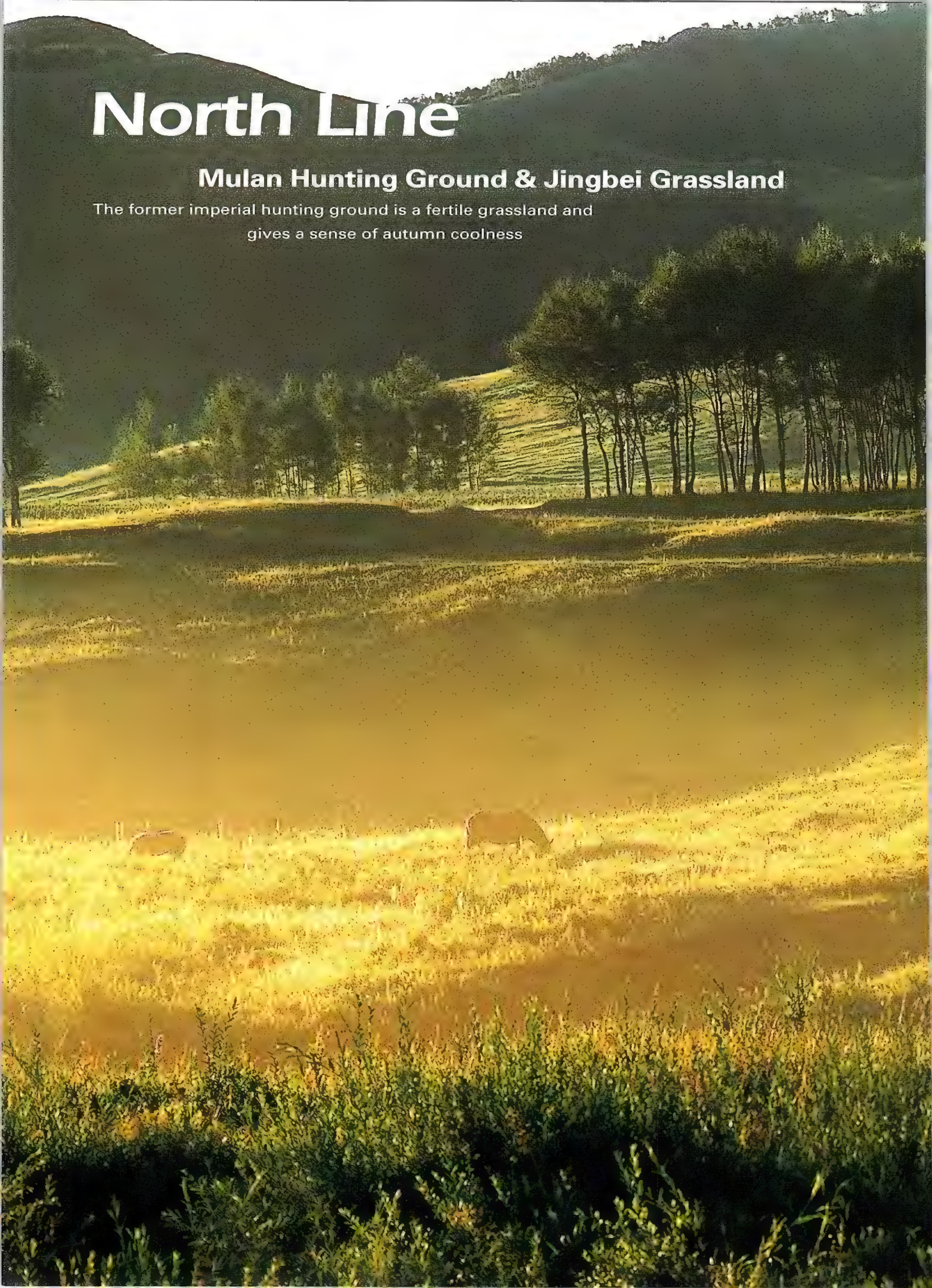
■ **Climate:** Qinhuangdao belongs to the semi-wet continental monsoon climate of the warm temperate zone. The average temperature in summer at the beach is 24–25°C.



North Line

Mulan Hunting Ground & Jingbei Grassland

The former imperial hunting ground is a fertile grassland and
gives a sense of autumn coolness





On the Bashang Grassland, 400 kilometres north of Beijing, and at 1,800–2,000 metres above sea level, rests the Mulan Hunting Ground. It used to be the imperial hunting ground in the Qing Dynasty in which the emperors and the royal family practised horsemanship skills and hunting. A journey to the cool grasslands can provide an escape from the Beijing summer heat and be great fun.

I left Beijing for the Summer Resort at Chengde first. Arriving in Weichang County, I immediately found a bus leaving for Junmachang (Military Horse Farm) and got on, and arrived at Bashang without any trouble.

Climbing up a long slope, with a background of many sheer mountains, I came to the first site called Saihan Pagoda. In the midst of a pine forest on the mountain ridge, I began to feel the chill and immediately added on more clothes. Then I took up the challenge to practise archery on horseback. To make my photos look exciting, I then “borrowed” roe deer, hedgehogs and eagles from the villagers. Only when I had ascended up to the pagoda did I realise that the vast Bashang Grassland

was actually below the mountain ridge.

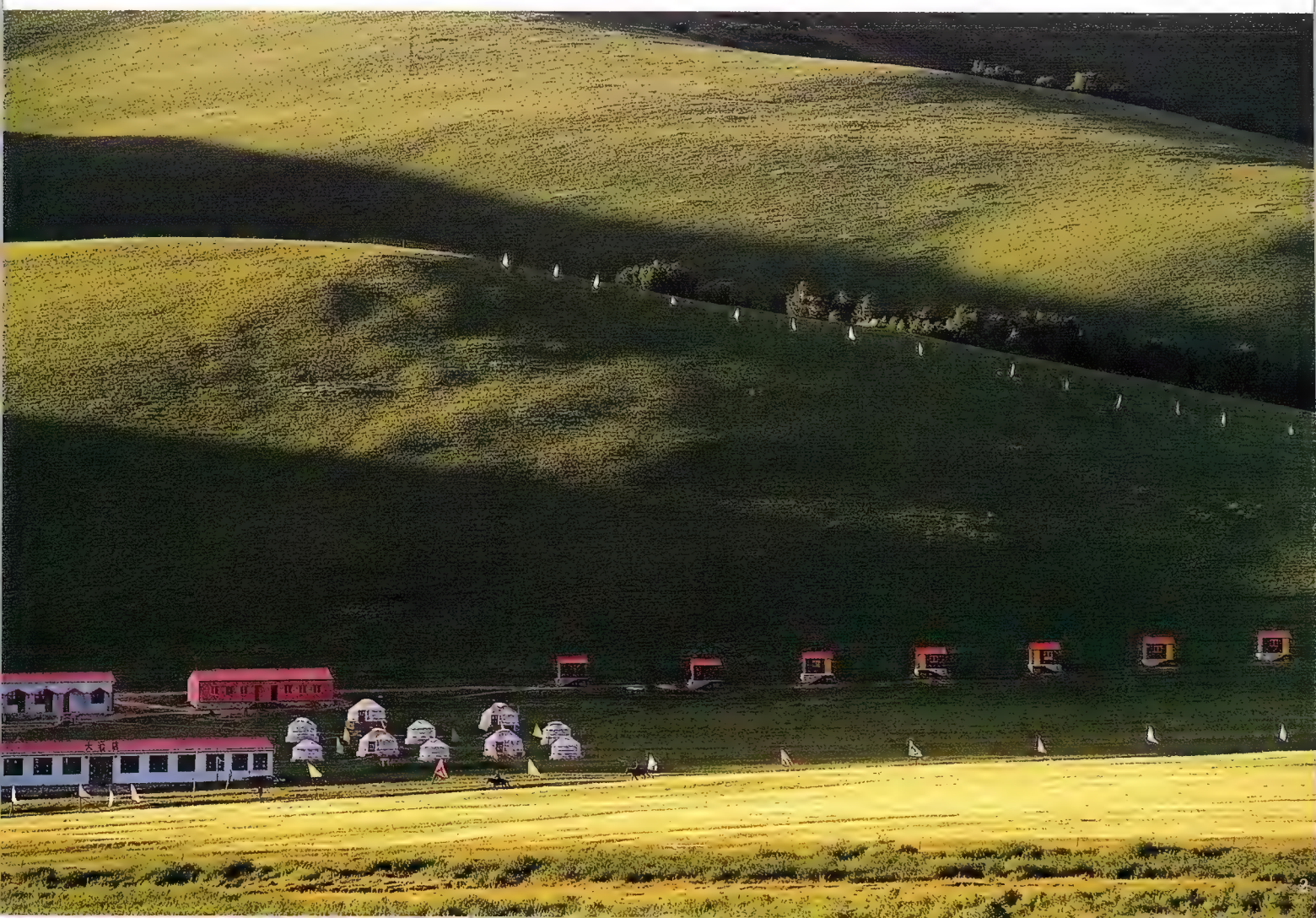
Bashang is also known as Saihanba, with the headquarters of the Machinery Farm at its centre. In the east surrounded by woods are holiday villages that contain yurts and wooden houses with wooden fences, all resembling villages of various different tribes. The style of the hunter’s wooden house enticed me; from its rear window, I had a full view of the woods. During the night it was not quiet — a storm arrived and buses roared in. Large groups of people came from Beijing to escape the city heat at the weekend.

The next morning there were still heavy dark clouds hanging around, but by noon blue sky started peering through and white clouds appeared; the air was extremely fresh and cool. After entering the deer farm in the woods, I attempted to follow the Qing emperors’ hunting style — blowing a “deer whistle” made of birch bark. It worked — the whistles did stir up the deer.

The grassland is especially fertile by the Taifeng Lake, I



1





rode a horse to stroll through the flowering grassland and around the green pine woods. Watching the endless trains of horses on the grassland, I felt like I was going back in time to the Qing imperial hunting. But the deer, rabbits and grouses I came across were not afraid and merely jumped aside, gazing curiously at us. Maybe they knew that I was not a part of the Qing troops.

Driving a motor boat on the lake was like skiing on a mirror. The water was so clear that I could not tell the difference between the sky, grassland and clouds, and their reflections in the water. The white crests of breaking waves behind the boats looked like pieces of white silk

floating on a "blue sky".

The boundary river between northern Bashang and Inner Mongolia is at most a small stream, but, because it lies on the grassland it is significant. I took a rubber boat floating down

the river and then rode a horse back through the grassland – a great thrill in both directions. There are many choices of horses by the river side, and a wide flat valley to gallop around with great satisfaction.

The sunset scene is always the most beautiful. Smoke was curling up from the yurts, and people were coming and going on the grassland. Cattle and sheep were trailing home down from the mountain slopes, and horses were galloping in the valley. What a great picture of autumn hunting at Mulan!

When I returned to the village where I lodged, flower girls were welcoming the tourists. Red lanterns were hung at the village gate, a bonfire was burning in the courtyard, and a whole lamb was being barbecued over an iron grate. Together with the "villagers", I cut the meat, drank wine, sang songs and danced until midnight. Everywhere there were lights, fireworks, singing and laughter. Was this similar to the celebration party the Qing emperors held after their hunts?

After this northern grassland expedition, I made my way west to the Jingbei Grassland. Jingbei is the closest

Previous page: Bashang Grassland in Fengning County bathed in the morning rays

1. Pilose antler produced in Mulan Hunting Ground

2. A holiday resort built on Jingbei Grassland

3. Tender feelings

4. A bonfire party held at Zhaibei Holiday Resort in Saihan







grassland to Beijing, also lying on the Bashang plateau; the difference is that the slope is steeper and the road more arduous.

The upright peaks, covered with a layer of thick grass, looked extremely lush and beautiful. On the slope facing the sun, there were woods of birch with wood houses on the left and yurts on the right. Further down were buildings in a mosaic of colours.

In the No.1 Grassland Inn north of Datan Town there were 43 yurts and 100 tents, arranged according to the Eight Banners of important families in the Qing Dynasty. With flags fluttering and guards standing solemnly, it was an atmosphere filled with imperial ceremony. At this Qing-dynasty style village, everyone could

take on roles of different people of the time period. I became a "flag guard", a "prince", a "hermit", and a Mongolian rider — each for a while. And also, there was the chance to taste all kinds of delicacies of the grassland.

In early morning on the flowering grassland, horses were grazing in the morning mist; at dusk the evening glow enveloped the whole village. Young people rode horses dashing around, chasing the sheep and cattle back home. As the red sun sank on the horizon, a bright moon quietly rose in the east. At night, the moonlight laid a layer of thin silk on the ground, and all kinds of wild flowers stood out in the dim light.



Tourist information

■ **Touring:** Chengde is on the way to Weichang. It was a summer resort of the Qing emperors and the second political centre of the Qing government.

The Summer Resort at the centre of Chengde was used by Qing emperors as their secondary palace in summer.

The Eight Outer Temples are lamaseries in different styles.

■ **Transport:** Take Train No. Y225 from Beijing to Chengde. Take the bus or mini-bus from Chengde to Weichang, then to Saihanba. Hire a local taxi to visit Bashang. Every morning a regular bus leaves at 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. from Weichang to Fengning, and the journey is about 6-7 hours. Between Fengning and Datan, there is a regular bus running at noon. (The last bus leaves Fengning bus station at 2:30 p.m.) But it's better to hire a taxi from Fengning since Jingbei Grassland is vast. There are many scheduled buses running from Fengning to Beijing.

■ **Lodging:** You may hire a taxi to look for a hotel. The rate of standard room in two-star or three-star hotels is 300-540 yuan. Weichang Hotel: 150 yuan; inns on Jingbei Grassland: 300 yuan; each yurt: 200-300 yuan.

■ **Delicacies:** Buckwheat flour noodles, potato cakes, dairy products, roast whole lamb. The lamb here is different from the stove-baked lamb in Inner Mongolia. The price is 500-1,000 yuan per head.

■ **Shopping:** Local products include dried mushrooms and mountain ferns.

■ **Suggested Itinerary:** (at least five days)

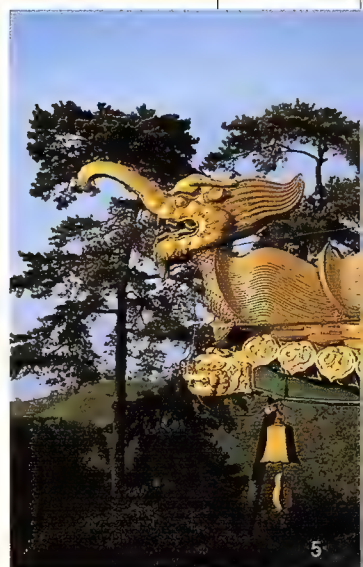
Day 1: In the morning take the train to Chengde; visit the Summer Resort and the Eight Outer Temples.

Day 2: In the morning take regular bus to Weichang, change buses to Saihanba; visit Bashang; lodge on Saihanba for the night.

Day 3: At noon take the regular bus to Weichang (very few buses to Weichang after noon); lodge at Weichang.

Day 4: In the morning take regular bus to Fengning, then hire a car to Bashang; visit Jingbei Grassland; lodge at Datan.

Day 5: Return to Fengning after lunch; in the afternoon take regular bus back to Beijing.



1. Leading a camel
2. Taifeng Lake in Saihan
3. Floating on the boundary river
4. Roast whole lamb, a famous local dish
5. Details of the gold-gilded dragon decorated on a roof of Xumifu Temple

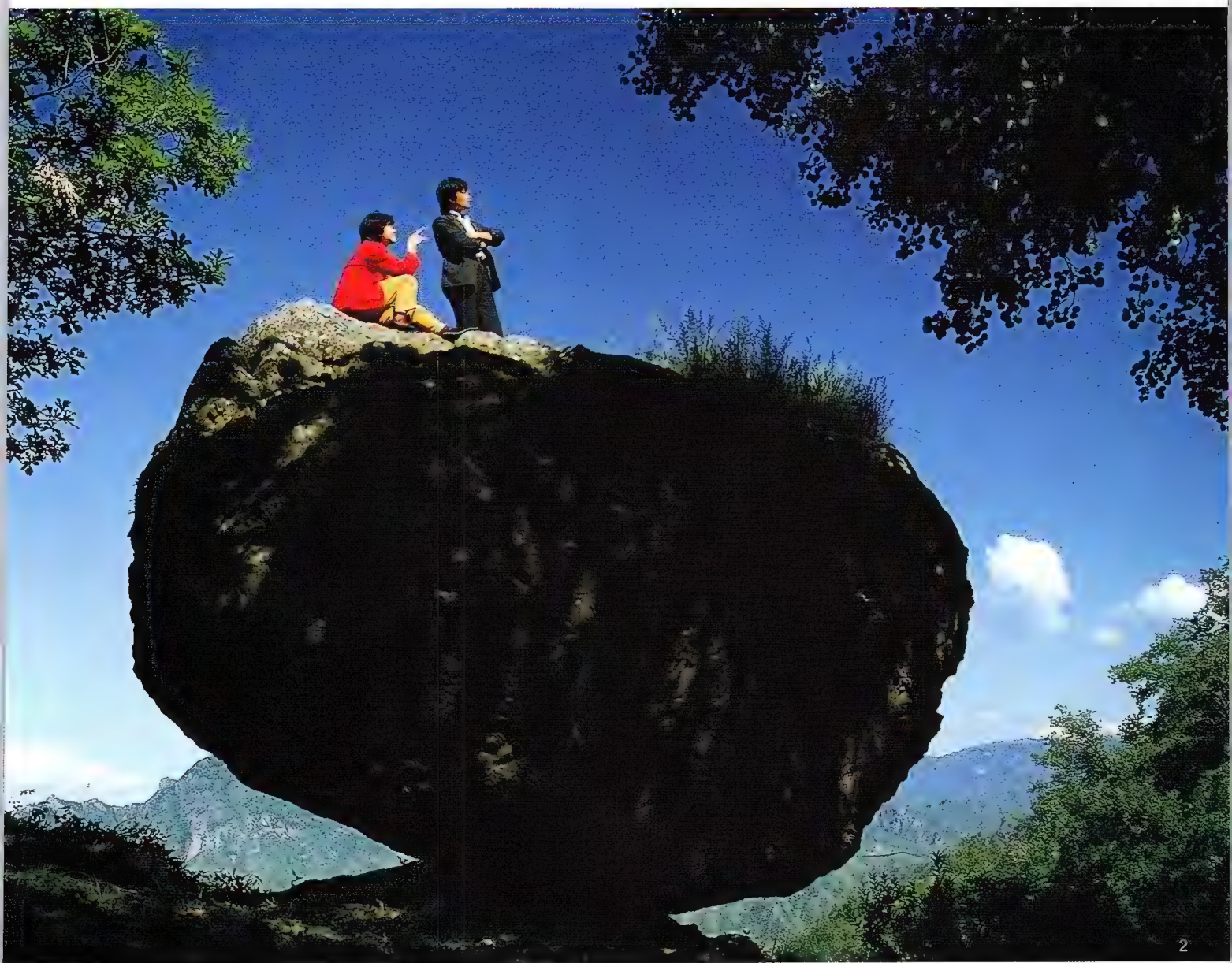


South Line



Yesanpo & Laiyuan

Heavens of peace hidden in the mountains



1. Vine covered rocks in Yesanpo
2. What a view!



Yesanpo (Three Wide Slopes) and the chilly town, Laiyuan, lying southwest of Beijing, are known as "havens of peace"; both are summer resorts with spectacular landscapes of magnificent mountains and deep valleys.

Many farmers in Yesanpo run their "home hotels" during the tourist season. My board for the night

was a house in the mountain village where the twinkling stars were the only lights.

My host gave me a ride to the valley on his motor-tricycle at dawn. After the fog dispersed, a red sun rose to shine on the surrounding peaks and cliffs. Shadows of willows reflected in the calm river water. Jumahe Valley is known as "Guilin in the North".

Having climbed half way up the mountain, I was led by a village boy to a cave. After passing through the cave at the other end I found myself in another world — it was so cold that I had goose-bumps as I started moving through the gorge.

Trembling, I climbed up onto the "Tiger Mouth", passed the "One Line Sky", crossed an iron-chained cliff, ascended the "Heavenly Ladder", and crossed the "Heavenly Bridge", felt almost up to the heaven.

When I rode back by horse to the "human world", the heat attacked me again. Jumahe (Blocking Horse) River



which lies in the middle of the valley provides a wonderful sight.

Late that day, I took the train to Laiyuan. I left the town of Laiyuan early the next morning, and as the car came to the entrance of the valley, a villager on horseback chased our car, boasting that his horse was small but sturdy, and good at climbing up mountains. With a look over the towering Nandian Ridge, I agreed to his offer. As I moved along on

horseback, the grass swept my feet while elegant tree branches touching my backs, and sometimes a pheasant flew overhead. The top of the ridge was very flat and wide, most suitable for horse-riding. Various flowers were blossoming. Cattle and horses moved across the grassland like clouds floating. It appeared ethereal — a great grassland in heaven.

Back to the ground from "heaven", I went to worship the gods in the Valley of Immortals. Stepping up along a stone path, my interest was further stimulated. Ascending the White Stone Mountain, I caught the view of the Lesser Yellow Mountain whose name suggests that its scenery is as beautiful as the famous Yellow Mountain in Anhui Province. At the Ten-Waterfall Gorge, I drank the spring water, took a quick dip in the waterfall, ate wild fruits, and gathered strange stones. And finally, I climbed onto the Wuzi Tower in the Black Dragon Valley to view the Great Wall extending to the north along the mountain ridge.

1. The imposing Bailixia Gorge
2. At the edge of "Tiger's Mouth"
3. Passing through the valley of "One Line Sky"







1. Rocks on Lesser Yellow Mountain (by Peng Zhenge)
2. A natural bridge (by Peng Zhenge)
3. The Miao Village in Yesanpo
4. Immortals' Valley in Laiyuan (by Liu Qiyun)
5. Laiyuan Spring in the city of Laiyuan (by Liu Qiyun)



Tourist Information

■ **Touring:** The Western Qing Tombs is one of the two imperial burial grounds of the Qing Dynasty. In its vast area 76 emperors are buried. At Tailing, the largest among all the tombs, sacrificial ceremonies are held every Saturday and Sunday morning.

A section of the Great Wall, called Zijingguan Pass lies between Laiyuan and the Western Qing Tombs.

Leaving Yixian County, you may visit Baoding, a 2,300-year-old historical and cultural city.

The "No. 1 Herbal Medicine Market" of the Ming Dynasty is at Qizhou, south of Baoding. Every year a 10-day medicinal fair is held here, starting from May 18.

■ **Transport:** Take the train at the Southern Railway Station of Beijing to Yesanpo; again, take a train to Laiyuan. Take a bus to Yixian and the Western Qing Tombs. Another bus goes to Baoding and Anguo, and take either train or bus to return to Beijing from Baoding.

■ **Lodging:** Yesanpo Hotel and Miao Village: 100-200 yuan.

Laiyuan Hotel: 130 yuan.

Guoquan Hotel at the Western Qing Tombs: 120 yuan.

Gucheng (Ancient City) Hotel in Baoding: 190 yuan.

■ **Local delicacies:** Mainly wild vegetables and game meat.

■ **Shopping:** Famous for walnuts, almonds and Chinese pepper.

■ **Suggested Itinerary:** (four to five days)

Day 1: In the afternoon take the train from Beijing South Railway Station to Yesanpo.

Day 2: Visit the scenic spots at Yesanpo, then take the train to Laiyuan in the evening.

Day 3: Visit the "Grassland in the Heaven", "Valley of Immortals" and other spots; stay at Laiyuan or a hotel at the Western Qing Tombs for the night.

Day 4: Take the early bus to visit Zijingguan Pass and the Western Qing Tombs in the morning; leave for Baoding via Yixian at noon; visit Baoding in the afternoon.

Day 5: In the morning visit Qizhou Herbal Medicine Market at Anguo; take a bus or a train from Baoding to Beijing.

Translated by M.Q.



DISCOVERIES

*Into the World
Called*

Shangri-La

Photos & article by Xie Guanghui





Packed and ready to go, I said to my wife, "I'm going to Shangri-La." A puzzled look crept onto her face. She concluded, "You must be tired of living at home and so you want to stay in a hotel. Is it because....?" Ever since Kuok Hock Nian, a wealthy Malaysian Chinese businessman renamed his hotel the "Shangri-La International" in 1983, the name Shangri-La quickly became a synonym for hotels among people in the Asia-Pacific region.

The term Shangri-La actually first appeared in a well-known novel entitled *Lost Horizon*, written by British author James Hilton in the 1930s. The story about a flight made by a group of four British diplomats stationed in India across the Himalayas introduced readers to a beautiful, calm and idyllic place called Shangri-La. Since the author did not specify the exact geographical location of Shangri-La, searches for its site over the past half century have been fruitless.

Recently, a friend from Yunnan told me, "The Shangri-La described in Hilton's novel has been found. It is in Dêqên, in northern Yunnan Province." A question then arose in my mind: What did this haven of peace of Western minds really look like?

A Tibetan History Museum

After my plane touched down in Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province, I changed to a local flight to Lijiang and then took an overnight long-distance bus ride lasting nearly 10 hours. It was a full day of travel before I finally arrived at Zhongdian, capital of Dêqên Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. The office of Zhongdian International Travel Agency was packed with people and ringing telephones. The next day was the start of the Kangba Art Festival and the travel agency was busy making arrangements for the influx of visitors. The Tibetan managing director, Gaisang Nyima, upon learning that I had come to find Shangri-La, quickly finished the work at hand and offered to take me to Guihua Temple in his private jeep.

As we drove out of the town, we went up a mountain slope. From here I looked across to the slope opposite and saw a cluster of temples; Zhacang and Gyikang, the two main Buddhist holy grounds, stood at the highest position at the centre. The Gaindain Sumzen Temple spread out clearly in the front. "The Fifth Dalai Lama gave it this name. In Chinese, it is known as Guihua Temple. It has been here for more than 300 years", Gaisang Nyima told me. He continued, "It is not only the largest Tibetan Buddhist temple in Yunnan, but also the centre of the Yellow Sect of Buddhism for both Sichuan and Yunnan provinces." I

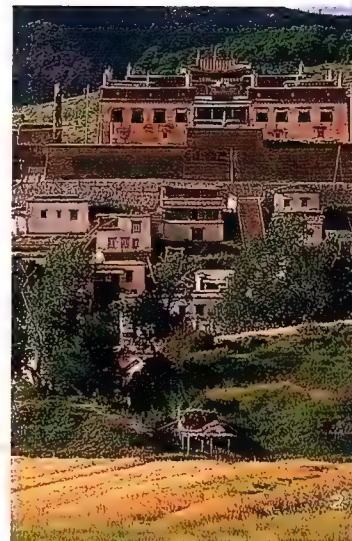
wondered: Was this the mysterious temple in James Hilton's novel?

Inside the temple, there were many old walls forming lanes cutting across each other like a labyrinth. The collapsed walls stood like broken tablets testifying to the temple's history.

As the thick heavy door to the main hall was pushed open, I could see dozens of Lamas sitting cross-legged, chanting Buddhist scriptures in unison and precision. The temple hall surrounded by thick mud walls provides a dramatic acoustic effect for the bass chanting of the Lamas; the echoes mixed with a rich smell of butter in the air. The flames of the butter lamps on the table danced while a long row of Buddhist statues looked intently at every person in the hall. Overwhelmed by the strong religious atmosphere, I dared not utter a single sound.

During its prime, the Gaindain Sumzen Temple had more than 1,200 Lamas. Even today, there are over 700 resident Lamas. "Lamas are representatives of Tibetan intellectuals and propagators of traditional Tibetan culture." When Gaisang Nyima finished speaking, he took off his Tibetan hat and laid prone on the ground. Since many episodes in James Hilton's novel took place in a Lamaist temple, I was particularly interested in this one.

Here I met the temple's kainbo, or the chief monk. A kind old man, his bright eyes indicated a man of wisdom and style. As he talked, I suddenly had the feeling that he was very much a reincarnation of the living Buddha in the novel. Through the words of the living Buddha, the author had presented a mysterious philosophy of man and life to the Western characters. Gaisang Nyima explained to me, "In the vast collection of the classics of Tibetan Buddhism, besides theological and religious doctrines, there is a rich wealth of philosophies and values. Since these aspects are little known by people outside the religion, they seem to be shrouded in mystery." To put it succinctly: Without understanding Lamaism, it is impossible to understand Tibetan culture. Lamaist temples are similar to history museums. Whether the murals and coloured sculptures housed in the temples, or the architectural styles of the temple buildings, whether the classical sutras or the cultural objects kept in the temples, they are all testimony to the splendid culture and historical traditions created by the Tibetans.





Previous page: Much of the Dooen Plateau is not accessible by highway. As a result, most daily necessities have to be carried by humans or horses.

Lamas at Gaindain Sumzen Temple putting sutras into a newly-made Buddha statue.

2. The 300-year-old Gaindain Sumzen Temple

3. A Lama at Gaindain Sumzen Temple making butter flowers



Next morning, I found the entire population of Zhongdian — over 100,000 people — all crowded into the horse racing ground at Wufeng Hill in the suburbs. The hill slope was covered with tents and flags of all shades of colours, pitched by Tibetan herdsmen from Yunnan, Tibet, Sichuan and Qinghai. Balloons flew on both sides of the newly completed visitors' rostrum. Under the balloons two slogans announced: "Celebrating the 40th anniversary of the founding of Dêqên Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture" and "Solemnly greeting the opening of the Second Kangba Art Festival". At the foot of the rostrum were pots of expensive tulips. The flower that has made Holland famous is actually originated in the undulating snow-peaked mountains of Zhongdian. According to a floral specialist, tulip was originally from both the coastal regions of the Mediterranean and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. In the late 16th century, they were introduced throughout Europe and

gradually became expensive flowers thanks to cultivation by horticulturists in Holland.

The Kangba Art Festival was officially opened with a special style of dance unique to the Kangba region. Several thousand Tibetan youngsters surged into the centre of the grounds and began the dance characterised by exaggerated motions and a quick tempo. They threw their long sleeves in the air as they whirled around as if trailing coloured silk in the air. Such a natural, unconstrained style could never be seen in urban theatres.

The most spectacular performance, however, was the display of Tibetan costumes. Dozens of performers from different parts of Kangba came to the centre stage — the men wearing furs of tigers and leopards, and the women wearing furs of fox and martens. For both the men and women, the head gear included large-size pearls, corals, green jade, agates, rubies and

sapphires. Naturally, decorations such as small Buddha statues and Tibetan knives inlaid with gold or silver were always part of the apparel. All these treasured antiques had been saved and

Expensive Tibetan Costumes

collected by generations of local tribal leaders over many years. Often one costume set is worth more than a million yuan. No wonder that all the Tibetans wearing these expensive costumes had security guards! An old man told me that such expensive outfits were a rare sight for them too. What made this display particularly outstanding was that the costumes were from different regions in Yunnan, Tibet, Qinghai and Sichuan inhabited by Tibetans.



3

1. Tibetan women's costumes can be extremely valuable.
2. A Tibetan artisan at Dêqên making Buddha niches
3. This Tibetan festival outfit with all its pearls, corals, green jade, agate, rubies and sapphires is worth at least a million yuan.

The 200-kilometre-long road leading from Zhongdian to Dêqên is part of the Yunnan-Tibet Highway. In poor condition, the road crosses over the snow-capped mountain pass at a height of 4,200 metres above sea level. There is only one bus service a day and you will be lucky to get hold of a ticket. Before daybreak, I went to the bus terminal and in the dim light I found a cluster of passengers loaded with packages of varying sizes around an old-fashioned Jiefang bus. Mostly they were local Tibetans. There were also several foreign travellers. Finally I squeezed my way onto the bus and luckily, claimed one of the empty seats left. The rest had to make do with standing all the way. I asked a Tibetan standing next to me why he would not wait for the next day. He replied with a wry smile, "It would be just the same tomorrow."

When the bus pulled out of Zhongdian, it started down a slope. On the way, people now and then tried to stop the bus; its doors could not open at all since it was already fully packed with passengers. This, however, did not seem to deter the new passengers. They first threw their luggage onto the bus through the windows and then began a hilarious push onto the bus. The braver ones simply climbed onto the roof and sat on the luggage rack. What scared me most was the

Shangri-La—the Sun and Moon in the Heart

squeaking sound produced by the metal parts of the bus when the vehicle turned, or when the driver slammed on the brakes or tried to slow down. I was really worried that our overloaded bus would cause the vehicle to lose control or suffer brake failure. Down the cliffs along the highway, wrecks of overturned vehicles were a frequent sight. It seemed a disaster might happen at any given time and I privately prayed for our safety.

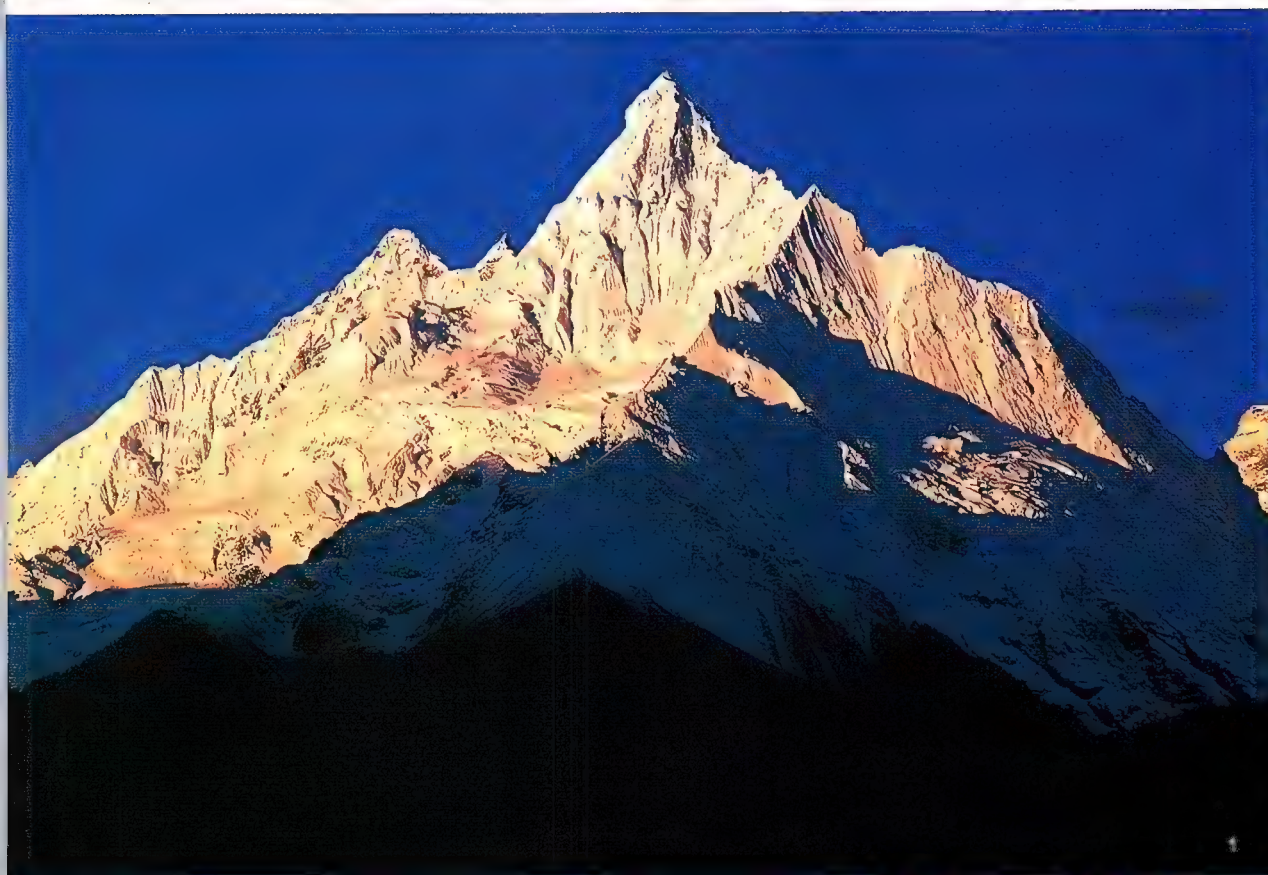
As time passed, we drove onto a road in the valley of the Lancang River where we clearly heard the roaring water. The road grew flat and my worries and tension evaporated. When we drove across the bridge, I had a better view of the spectacular boulders and sheer cliffs on both sides of the river. Most of the mountains were barren and a scene of ghastly desolation. Indeed it was just as it was portrayed in the novel: "It seemed to be the end of the world." Banks along the waterway, however, were refreshingly green, forming a strong contrast to the mountains. The bus suddenly came to a stop and the driver announced, "Here we are, in Benzilan. We'll stop here for half an hour, so take a rest and get something to eat." Like birds being released from captivity, the passengers rushed out through the door and the windows with great commotion.

The restaurant was quickly packed with people, so I decided to take a walk along the street. I noticed that bananas

and other tropical fruits were sold at just about two yuan per kilo. How could they be so cheap? I found they were all local produce. Once again I remembered what the author said in the novel: "The mountain seemed to drop vertically into a crack which must have been the result of a much earlier movement of the earth's crust.... The mountain valley, several thousand feet vertically down the cliffs, cuts squarely across the meeting point of the temperate and subtropical zones, supporting an abundant variety of rare plants." Wasn't James Hilton just writing about this place?

The driver tooted his horn and we resumed our journey. The road from Benzilan was uphill and after three hours, the terrain became entirely mountainous. Outside the bus windows was a world of ice and snow. Some sparse dwarf trees were like jade branches sparkling in the bright sunlight, making my eyes dizzy. The bus was like a sauna, and because of the cold air outside, the window panes quickly became covered with moisture. I quietly opened the window to let in the cold air; it blew like knives on my face and quickly dropped the temperature inside the bus. The passengers sitting behind me protested and I had to shut the window. Someone remarked, "The bus is going through the pass of Baimang Mountain." Driving on the snow-covered road, the bus seemed to be rowing on water. As we travelled on such a road zigzagging through the mountain, I was gripped by fear. I felt disaster was coming with every turn. The Tibetans on the bus, however, were not at all nervous. Like going on a pilgrimage into the mountains, they began to sing *The Song of the Sacredness* which praised the mountains. The singing accompanied us all the way to our safe arrival at Dêqên. Only then did I find out that Baimang was really a sacred mountain.

Dêqên was the final destination of this bus. To go any further from here one had to rent a vehicle of some kind. Consequently, the Meili Snow Mountain Travel Agency enjoyed brisk business. Its general manager Cering Nyima was a graduate from the Beijing Central Institute of Nationalities and also among the first to put forward the idea that Shangri-La is located here. He remarked, "Here at Dêqên, we are surrounded by snowy mountains with primeval forests at their base. In addition, there is an expansive grassland cut into eight pieces by a zigzagging river, symbolising the eight-petal lily flower. People here have their own religion, visit their own magnificent temples and maintain a harmonious and peaceful relationship. All of these aspects are similar to the idyllic place called Shangri-La described by James Hilton in his novel. In fact, the term 'Shangri-La' comes from Tibetan, meaning 'the sun and moon in my heart'. It is also an ideal place to live in the hearts and minds of Tibetans...."



In his novel, James Hilton wrote that the hero of the story went to watch the sunrise at Qomolangma but this highest peak in the world totally disappointed him. When he came face to face with the less towering Karakal Peak, however, he was captivated by an entirely different feeling as he found it to be the most loveable peak in the world, just like a wonderful pyramid. Its simple contours gave it the image of a children's painting, but its height, width and the sense of three dimensions far exceeded its simple outline. It looked so magnificent and peaceful that the hero in the story found it hard to tell whether he was seeing reality or he was transported into a fairyland.



In the morning, Meili Snow Mountain along with the Taizi (Prince) Snow Mountain, several hundred kilometres in the distance, stood in a lofty formation. Under the golden sunlight, the mysterious Karakal Peak began to reveal itself from the shade of clouds, sparkling like a pyramid. I seemed to have entered the land portrayed by James Hilton and was overwhelmed by the same kind of feeling that had gripped the author. Through my telescopic lens, I discovered that at the foot of the Karakal Peak, the two glaciers, Mingyongqia and Siqia were like large dragons with silvery scales, meandering down from a height of 5,500 metres above sea level to the wooded area at 2,700 metres, which was only 800 metres from the Lancang River. Such low-latitude contemporary glaciers are rarely seen in the world.

A Pyramid-shaped Snowy Mountain Peak

Under the golden sunlight, the mysterious Karakal Peak began to reveal itself from the shade of clouds, sparkling like a pyramid. I seemed to have entered the land portrayed by James Hilton and was overwhelmed by the same kind of feeling that had gripped the author. Through my telescopic lens, I discovered that at the foot of the Karakal Peak, the two glaciers, Mingyongqia and Siqia were like large dragons with silvery scales, meandering down from a height of 5,500 metres above sea level to the wooded area at 2,700 metres, which was only 800 metres from the Lancang River. Such low-latitude contemporary glaciers are rarely seen in the world.

1. A pyramid-shaped summit — one of the 13 Taizi Peaks
2. Tibetans at Feilai Temple in Dêqên are involved partly in animal husbandry and partly in agriculture.





I finally realised my wish, but not before suffering great hardship.

Cering Nyima found me a Tibetan guide named Zhaxi Nyima, from the local Mingyong Village, and prepared supplies of food and water to last for three days. Then he sent us off in a cross-country Mitsubishi jeep. The driver, Kasang Zhaxi, was a demobilised soldier who had been in the border war with Vietnam; his driving skills were top-notch. The jeep took us downstream along the Lancang River. An hour later, the vehicle made a right turn, left the Yunnan-Tibet Highway and immediately the jeep began to roll around on heaps of stones. Like a small boat pitched about in a storm at sea, the vehicle rocked and tossed, thrashing my head against its roof several times. It also ran into danger several times, but always miraculously pulled itself out of difficulty. I thought to myself, "This is surely the best way to see the advantage of a V6 cross-country four-wheel-drive jeep!"

After the jeep crossed the Lancang River Bridge, Kasang Zhaxi pulled to a stop and said, "This is as far as I can take you."

An Arduous Trip

The trail from here on was about a metre wide, zigzagging into the mountains. We trudged with difficulty for two hours only to find that the trail ahead had been washed out by the rain several days ago. Along the cliffs there was only a narrow path about the width of my shoes. Cold sweat dripped down my forehead as I moved my feet with extreme caution. Suddenly one foot slipped and pebbles rolled down into the valley like hail. Far down below the Lancang River was as thin as a small creek. I grabbed onto some protruding rocks and pulled myself in flush with the cliffs, and held my position for quite a while. Calmed down somewhat, I eventually reached the other side of the cliff, before taking a deep breath.

All the way I saw strongholds built on the cliffs and eagles circling in the blue sky. When I had climbed to the top of a mountain ridge, I could see that the mountain path flattening out gradually, leading into a small village, where brick houses were whitewashed. Colourful Tibetan flags were fluttering in the wind. Surrounding the village were barley and corn fields like patches of green paint on a huge sand dune. "That's Mingyong

Village, my home," Zhaxi Nyima informed me.

In the village, a few residents stood outside their houses, looking at this stranger. They all had dark complexions and wide faces. Clad in long robes, they each wore a huge badge with the image of their sacred religious leader, Bainqen, on their chest. Several young girls, arms entwined, swayed their bodies as they sang a song praising Shangri-La: "At the foot of the lofty snow mountain, where the gentle Nanzi River flows by, is my beloved hometown called Shangri-La."

Zhaxi Nyima took me to his house, into a rather dark living room with a stove surrounded by several benches. A dark pot on the stove was brimming with barley porridge. The smoke from the stove was so thick that my eyes hurt. I could barely make out the shadows of people staring at me — three children and a woman. "How are you!" Zhaxi Nyima's wife, Zhoima, was



already greeting me. After I returned the greetings, she hurriedly cleaned up the table and then set out a bowl of buttered tea. Her three kids dashed out and then miraculously came back carrying apples and walnuts, which they said had been just picked from their own fruit trees. It was the first time that I ever had a fresh walnut with a soft outer shell still full with thick juice. Zhaxi Nyima found me a small horse. After we had some cakes of roasted qingke barley and buttered tea, he threw a piece of woollen felt on the horse as a saddle for me, tucked a flashlight in the bag and announced, "Let's go. We must get to the Prince Temple before it is dark."

Previous page: Tibetans mostly make their living from animal husbandry.

- 1. Horses remain the important means of transport on the Dêqên Plateau.**
- 2. Dêqên — the beautiful and peaceful Shangri-La**
- 3. Tibetan hosts always treat their guests with buttered tea.**





We walked upstream along the creek created by the melting glacier and soon entered a forest, green, damp and full of bryophytes and mushrooms as well as trees that had naturally fallen, resembling a fairy land of greenery. How could this forest had been so well preserved? "The Karakal Peak is not only a sacred place of Tibetan Buddhism but also the first of the eight sacred mountains," Zhaxi Nyima explained with a great pride. Since it was a sacred mountain, of course, not a single blade of grass or a tree could be touched. After we had trekked for more than two hours, the zigzagging trail leading up the mountain became more and more precipitous, so we had to walk.

Not until dusk did we arrive at the Prince Temple near Mingyongqia Glacier. There was only an old Tibetan man in the monastery and we slept that night on the floor near the fireplace in his house. Once the sun had set, the temperature took a sharp dive. The old Tibetan man built a roaring fire, boiled a pot of buttered tea and baked two cakes of qingke barley. He also poured us each a large bowl of qingke barley wine. From my bag I took out canned ham, beef jerky and instant noodles. We ate and drank together till we were all pretty drunk and dropped into a sound sleep.

As the sun cast its light on the ice of Karakal Peak, Zhaxi Nyima and I began our careful climb on the glacier. The slope became steeper and the colour of the glacier gradually changed from grey to snowy white as we pushed our way up. Zhaxi Nyima informed me, "The Karakal is a virgin peak that has not been conquered. Teams of mountaineers from the United Kingdom, United States, Japan and a joint team of Chinese and Japanese sportsmen have made several attempts at this sacred peak but none has succeeded. On January 3, 1991, 17 Chinese and Japanese mountaineers were killed here on the mountain." Just then a gust of cold wind blew up and large patches of dark clouds covered up the peak. The sky turned dark and once again I heard deafening avalanches. This time the sound was closer and I felt the mountain shudder. Zhaxi Nyima turned pale, obviously gripped by fear. His words conveyed his mood: "We cannot stay any longer. The sacred mountain is angry. Let's go back."

1. Looking for Shangri-La
2. The imposing Taizi Mountain

The Sacred Mountain







On the way down the mountain, Zhaxi Nyima told me that there was a plane wreckage on the grassland at the foot of Karakal Peak. Most of the plane had been damaged and many of its parts had been used to make jewellery, or Tibetan knives or other tools. A camera from the plane was found by a Tibetan and sold to a middle school teacher at Dêqên. It took me little effort to find Namo, the teacher who bought the camera, living at No. 1 Taohua Village, Shengping Town, Dêqên.

It was a German Agfa 120 camera made in the 1940s, still in its original leather case. I opened it and found the camera intact. "When I bought it, it had an unfinished roll of film but unfortunately it had been exposed. Otherwise, it could have proved extremely valuable material," the owner said. The camera has nothing that is directly related with James Hilton's story because the book was written in the 1930s while the plane crash took place in the 1940s. Perhaps the story of a plane crash in Hilton's novel prompted the allied forces or the US Air Force to open up this air route. Or perhaps James Hilton simply put it in words while some Westerners

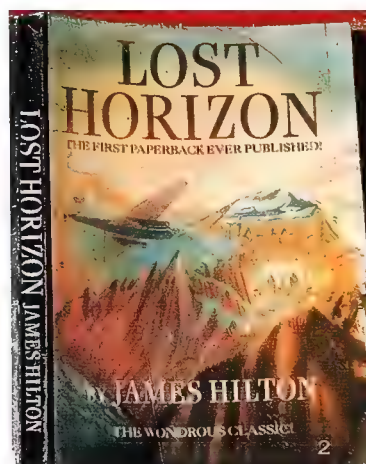
planning to open this route.

Amazingly,

the event of a sudden plane crash, presented as a moving tale in the novel, really took place a decade after the tale was written. During World War II, a US air force cargo plane landed in Zhongdian during its flight over the "hump line". The plane's body was broken apart in a forced landing. It, however, did not explode. The pilots were rescued and whisked away by local residents and Lamas. Yangzom, then a teenage girl, witnessed the whole event. Today, this lady in her 70s not only recounted the story for me but also showed me an iron Kodak film container that one of the rescued pilots had given to her as a gift.

When I finally returned home, my wife was surprised to see how dark my complexion had become. She took out the newspaper clippings about Shangri-La, saying to me

Traces of History



with a smile, "Shangri-La was a place created in a novel. The author James Hilton had never even been to China." Obviously she meant that I should not have taken it seriously. I explained that I believe many authors have the ability to write about places they have never seen. I have heard, for example, Fan Zhongyan of the Song Dynasty had never been to Dongting Lake nor Yueyang Tower, yet he wrote a lasting piece entitled *The Story of the Yueyang Tower*. After all, it is beautiful to create a peaceful and idyllic paradise on earth for all to dream about.

Translated by F. Huang

Previous page: Tibetan dance performed at the Kangba Art Festival

1. Namo, a middle school teacher, shows the camera found in a wrecked plane.
2. This novel is the origin of the term Shangri-La (by Ma Baozhong)

Tips for Traveller

Dêqên Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in the north-western part of Yunnan Province is located in the border regions of Sichuan, Yunnan and Tibet. Its natural scenic wonders, mystical religious and cultural traditions and unique ethnic customs combine to make it very much like the place called Shangri-La described in James Hilton's novel *Lost Horizon*, published in the 1930s.

Major scenic sites at Zhongdian: Gaindain Sumzen Temple, located at the foot of the Foping Hill five kilometres north of the county town Zhongdian. Built by the Fifth Dalai Lama under the auspices of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty in 1679, it was known as one of the 13 holy grounds. The temple holds a rich collection of invaluable cultural objects. Baishui Terrace, in Sanba Town 101 kilometres east of the county town, is considered China's largest holy terrace and known as "the Land of Immortals".

Major scenic sites at Dêqên: The 13 Peaks of Taizi Mountain. One of them, Karakal, rising up 6,740 metres, is the highest peak in Yunnan Province. The Mingyongqia Glacier is one of the world's rare contemporary marine glaciers due to its unique location — low latitude and high sea level in a monsoon area. A 40-kilometre stretch of Baimang Snow Mountain Nature Reserve is home to more than 10 types of vegetation found in various areas from tropical to northern polar zones. It also has animals such as the golden monkey, clouded leopard and black deer.

It is rather inconvenient without a jeep of your own either at Zhongdian or Dêqên. Fortunately, local travel agencies provide assistance, making travel much easier.

Tours arranged by the Dêqên International Travel Agency: One- to three-day trips at Zhongdian (Guihua Temple, Sutra Hall, Napa Lake, Baishui Terrace, Bitu Lake and a look at the Tibetan way of life). Address: 2/F, 1 Zhijie, Jiantang Road, Zhongdian; Contact Person: He Jianhua; Tel: (887) 822 5657; Fax: (887) 822 2364.

Tours arranged by the

Dêqên International Travel Agency:

(1) Two-day trips to Meili Snow Mountain and Mingyongqia Glacier; (2) Four-day trips to Baimang Snow Mountain, Taizi Snow Mountain and Lancang River Valley; (3) Two-day trips for viewing folk customs and Buddhist culture in Dêqên. Address: Meili Snow Mountain Hotel, Dêqên; Contact Person: Cering Nyima; Tel: (887) 841 2688; Fax: (887) 8412688.

Transport: Fly from Kunming to Lijiang, then change to a long-distance bus to Zhongdian. An alternative is to take one of the long-distance bus services between Kunming and Zhongdian. There are four to five bus services every day between Kunming and Zhongdian while there are seven or



eight between Lijiang and Zhongdian. There is only one service a day between Zhongdian and Dêqên and the tickets are hard to get.

Accommodation: A standard room at Bitu Hotel in Zhongdian costs 450 yuan a day. The rate at Zhongdian Tourist Hotel is 250 yuan. At Meili Snow Mountain Hotel in Dêqên a standard room costs 120 yuan while a single room costs 90 yuan a day.

Climate: Dêqên has a temperate to arctic zone climate with an annual average temperature between 4.7°C to 16.5°C. The highest temperature is 25.1°C and the lowest, -27.4°C. Late May and early October, are the best times for travel.



雲南省迪慶藏族自治州旅遊圖
Tourist Map of Dêqên Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan

1. Wrapping up sutras in yellow silk to put into new Buddha statues
2. Yangzom showing the Kodak film container given to her by one of the rescued pilots (by Ma Baozhong)



BLACK CUISINE

— TASTY ANT DISHES



1

Photos & article by Shan Xiaogang

"Eat black dishes, have black drinks and embrace the black culture; vitalise your life, your fate and your spirit". Hearing these words, you would think it is the motto of a sinister underworld gang; its real meaning would only be understood upon entering the Fuyishan Restaurant in the Food Village of the Multicoloured City in Dalian.

Everything in the Fuyishan Restaurant — its signboard and interior decorations, its drinks and culinary treats — show the strong association with the long, thin black insects, ants. On the menu are "Black Foals Swimming in the

Sea", "Celestial Mayflies Picking Lotuses", "Ants Building Nests", "Snow Mayflies and Sweetened Bean Paste", and "Celestial Mayflies on the Snow Mountain" — all containing ants. One glance at their names would send cold shivers down your spine. There is a famous Sichuan dish called "Ants Climbing up Trees" that is usually cooked with bean vermicelli and minced meat in most restaurants. But in Fuyishan Restaurant, the dish is cooked with the real thing — large black ants.

At our request, the restaurant owner Mr. Yuan prepared a selection of ant dishes. Yuan had been a newspaper reporter before he started this business. When he saw our considerable hesitation sitting at the table of ant dishes, he came over and recounted a story about his first encounter with ants: About a decade ago when

he was in the Changbai Mountains gathering news, he saw an old man eating ants. Surprised, he decided to have a chat with the old man, and even more surprised, he learned that the old man, who seemed to have great vitality, with hardly a trace of his advanced years, was 97 years old! The ant eater said that years ago, when he was suffering from several diseases, he decided to imitate the bears who eat ants, and gradually his health improved. Over the several decades since he had started eating ants, not only had he freed himself from those chronic diseases, but had regained his youthful vigour — even his white hairs had turned dark.

After coming back from the Changbai Mountains, Mr. Yuan did his research and consulted specialists for information concerning ants. He learned that a



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tiny ant can lift an object 400 times its own weight and can pull an object 1,700 times heavier than its body because the ant has an element called oxalic acid in its body. The tonic effect of a certain volume of ants is stronger than the same weight of wild ginseng. One kilogram of ants can generate 700 calories of heat. The ant's body contains many kinds of amino acids and plenty of trace elements, providing excellent nutrition.

Moreover, in traditional prescriptions of Chinese medicine, ants have been used to

cure diseases. The Chinese medicinal classic, Compendium of Materia Medica, states that ants can be used in remedies for malignant tumours, rheumatism, arthritis, tracheitis and many other illnesses. In Japan, ants are used in anti-ageing medicines, and in the United States scientists have extracted a new anti-cancer element from ant moults and wings. Eating

ants has become a common practice in the world: the Africans eat fried ants, the Indonesians have ants together with rice, the Mexicans produce canned ants, and the Americans have their ant chocolates. In China, the people of Guangxi and Yunnan drink ant wine and eat ant eggs. And now, Mr. Yuan has acquired a unique method to increase the nutritional value of the natural black ants gathered from the forests in the Changbai Mountains by 60 to 80 percent.

Encouraged by Manager Yuan's explanation, I picked up some dry ants with chopsticks and put them into my mouth. They were crisp, sweet, tasty and refreshing, though a bit sour. Since the ants were nutritious and tasted delicious, I helped myself till there were no more.

The ants restaurant is located in the Food Village in the Multicoloured City in Dalian. A set dinner of ant dishes costs about 300 yuan, and it is available in all four seasons. This restaurant is unique in featuring this kind of dishes and does not have any branches elsewhere.

Translated by Xiong Zhenru



1. You may not want it, but once you try it, you'll like it.
2. Real ants "Climbing up Trees"
3. "Black Fools Swimming in the Sea"
4. Fuyi Restaurant
5. Products made from black ants

Biggest Horticulture Fair, Yunnan

Preparations for the 1999 International Horticultural Exposition are under way. The exhibition will be held in Kunming, capital of Southwest China's Yunnan Province, in May 1999 and will last for six months. The theme of the largest international exhibition China has ever hosted will be "Man and Nature – Marching into the 21st Century". Highlights include: gardens and courtyards dovetailing traditional culture with modern civilisation; achievements in mixing nature and ecology, and economy and environmental protection; and advanced technology in horticulture and landscaping. An exhibition hall complex covering an area of 205 hectares is being constructed. More than 160 countries have been invited to take part in the exposition, and special days will be designated to salute each participating country.

Yellow River Park, Henan

A theme park focused on the Yellow River has been built in Zhengzhou, capital of Central China's Henan Province. The first phase of the Yellow River Grand View Theme Park has been completed and is ready to open to the public. The joint venture between China and Singapore was started in 1993 and its construction will be finished in three stages.

Garden Corridor, Shanghai

Construction of a 23-kilometre garden road across Shanghai's urban area has begun recently. The road will start from Hongqiao International Airport in the west of the city and run through the five urban districts of Changning, Xuhui, Luwan, Huangpu and Pudong to link with Dongfang Road in the Pudong New Area, in the eastern part of the city.

Tian'anmen Rostrum Restoration, Beijing

The 300-year-old Tian'anmen (Heavenly Gate of Peace) rostrum will undergo a renovation soon. The project is expected to be completed by October 1, 1999, the 50th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

The ancient brick-and-wood building, originally called Chengtianmen, was first built in 1417 during the Ming Dynasty. It was destroyed twice by fire and the present structure was rebuilt in 1651, shortly after the establishment of the Qing Dynasty in 1644, and renamed Tian'anmen. Examinations disclosed that some wooden pillars have split open due to the arid climate and others have rotted, in addition to water seepage at the bases of some of the golden pillars. The rostrum was put under special state protection in 1961 and opened to tourists in 1988.

Rain Forests Increased

China's largest tropical rain forest area in the Xishuangbanna Nature Reserve, Yunnan Province, will get further protection when the reserve is enlarged from 247,000 hectares to 533,000 hectares. Xishuangbanna has at least 58 species of rare or endangered plants, 15 percent of China's total, and is home to 102 species of mammals and 427 species of birds, a quarter and a third of China's total respectively.

Forest coverage in South China's Hainan Province has risen from 18.4 percent 10 years ago to the current 50.5 percent, 36 percentage points higher than the national average. This is due to local efforts in environmental control and afforestation. Since the province was founded in 1988, the local government has placed emphasis on forestry development and worked out a series of regulations to end the felling of rain forests there. The coverage of tropical rain forests has increased 50 percent to 600,000 hectares during the past decade.

Nomadic No More, Xinjiang

More than 150,000 herdsmen and their families in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region have bade farewell to their traditional nomadic way of life and settled down. This represents 67 percent of the herding households in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, which is one of China's five major pastoral regions. Weather conditions on the vast grassland are severe, making the life of a herdsman difficult, especially in winter.

New Air Routes

Regular direct air service has begun to connect Harbin, capital of Northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, and Seoul, the capital of the Republic of Korea. The distance between the two cities is 916 kilometres and the flight time is three hours. There are four flights a week. China Northern Airlines and a ROK air company are jointly operating the service.

Flights commenced in May, between Chongqing, a municipality on the upper reaches of the Yangtse River, and Taipei and Gaoxiong in Taiwan.

Silk Road Venture, Northwest

Tourists who want to drive through the ancient Silk Road finally have a chance to do so – a project launched by the China Rainbow Travel Service will cater to their demands. One such trip will be organised in August. The 3,000-kilometre journey will begin in Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi Province and the starting point of the Silk Road. Along the way, the travellers will pass through more than 100 cities and towns, including Lanzhou and Ürümqi, as well as many significant historical sites and scenic spots, such as Jiayuguan, the western end of the Great Wall, and Turpan, an area in Xinjiang noted for its grapes.

AN ANTIQUES NIGHT MARKET IN CHENGDU

There is a fascinating antiques night market in Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province in Southwest China.

Located at the cross-roads of Yandao and Zhuangyuan streets, in the triangle area between the Minshan Hotel, the Jinjiang Hotel and the Chengdu Civil Aviation Booking Office. It has always enjoyed brisk business since it first opened in 1989. Each evening at six o'clock, the street pedlars begin to appear out of nowhere to converge on the pavements. They work quickly and in an orderly fashion, setting up their square tables, lighting up gas lamps and opening their "treasure boxes". Very quickly about 150 antique stands appear on the pavement which was a parking lot for bicycles just a few minutes ago.



Most of the pedlars do this in their "spare-time", they usually have a daytime job but come here to do a bit of "moonlighting" and pass the evening. Many of these proprietors have learned to speak some English and the Guangdong and Shanghai dialects because they believe it will help with their sales. Among their

customers, the foreigners and businessmen from Hong Kong and Taiwan are "the main targets". The pedlars even know the different hobbies of their customers. For instance, the Japanese love to buy ancient books, Europeans like curios, Hong Kong people are fond of "small articles", and the Taiwanese like porcelain....

It is an experience just to walk around the night market. One can learn a lot from watching what attracts the buyers' eye and how the pedlars hawk. On sale are jadeware, articles used in the Cultural Revolution, folk arts and crafts, Tibetan

Buddhist articles, ancient books, replicas of cultural relics, etc. Prices vary too, ranging from a dozen yuan for a walnut carving or small ornament, to several hundred and even several thousand yuan for antique jade; from a Mao Zedong bust costing several dozen yuan, to a Buddhist bone sculpture of several hundred

1 yuan, to rubbings from the seals of the famous ancients at several thousand yuan a set. Also on sale, the Kangxi Dictionary with the seal of a high official of the Qing

Dynasty, snuff-bottles, *ruyi* wood-carvings, incense burners, carved ebony-wood pen containers.... Even "spare parts" for ancient furniture such as table legs and chair backs are for sale. They really are a superb feast for the eye!

No wonder the night market is always crowded with visitors.

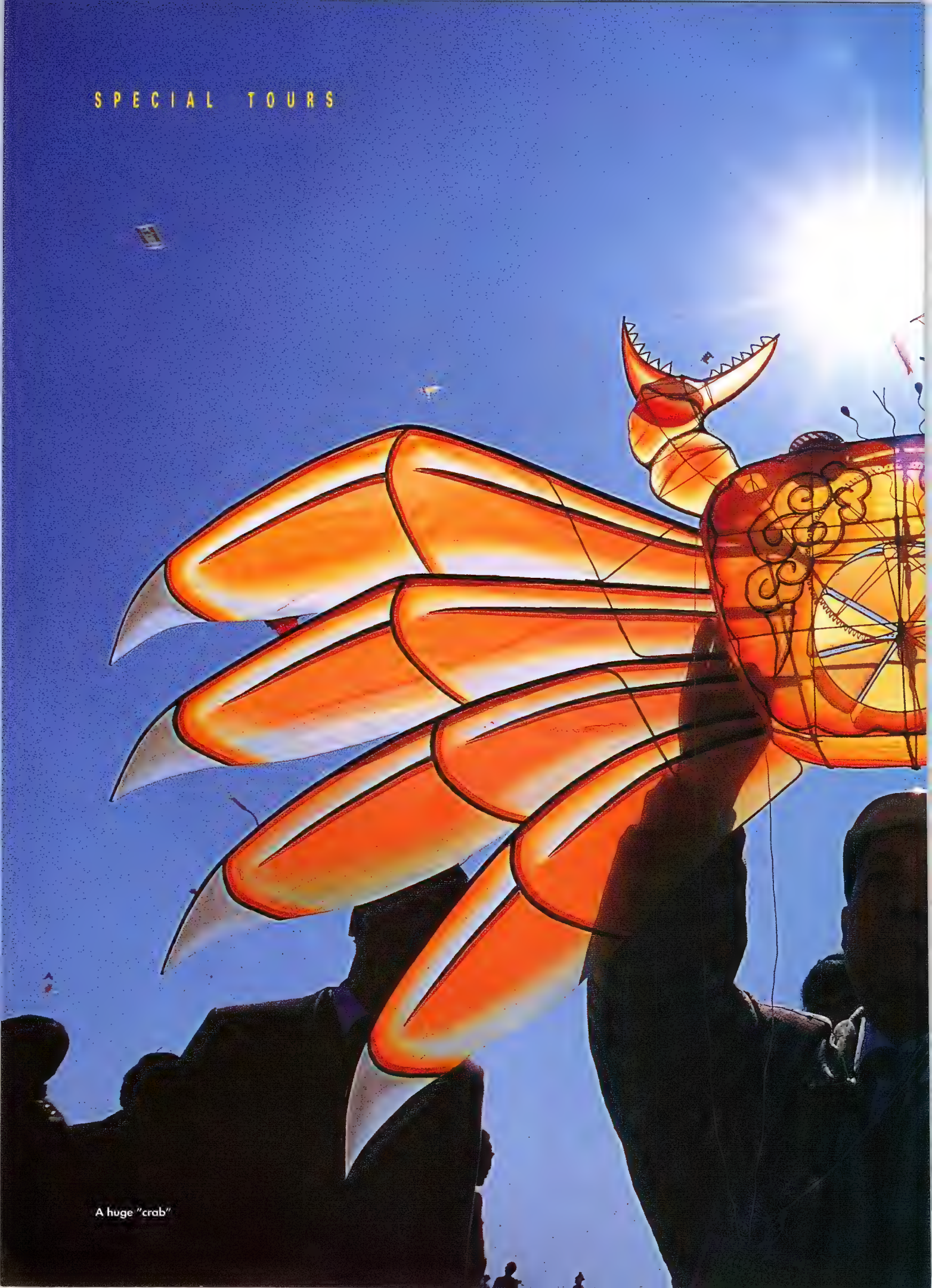
Photos & Article by Huang Yanhong

Translated by Xiong Zhenru



1. This pet has joined the antiques business.
2. The antiques market bathed in light
3. In the glow of light the Bodhisattva gazes in differently.

SPECIAL TOURS



A huge "crab"

A SKY ^{of} KITES



Weifang, Shandong Province, has long been acclaimed for its kites. It has the world's largest museum of kites containing a rare collection of kites from both ancient and modern times. The annual **Weifang International Kite Festival** draws great crowds of tourists from all parts of the world. Some large kites can weigh up to 3,000 kilograms while the smallest fits into an ordinary match box. A giant bird kite looks so real that it sends a flock of sheep scurrying away in fear.... A visit to Weifang is an unusual and enjoyable experience.

Photos & article by Shan Xiaogang

A 320-kilo Goddess of Mercy Kite Takes to the Air

Spring was already in the air as I made my way to Weifang in April to take part in the international kite festival — to observe and enjoy. Weibei Beach is a gigantic flat ground where the annual kite-flying competition is held. When I arrived, more than a dozen huge kites were already flying there. The longest one was 1,500 metres, trailing in the blue sky like an enormous belt of coloured silk. The



largest one, called "The Dragon and Phoenix Auguring Prosperity", had to be pulled by a 10-ton truck, aided by over a dozen people, before it could get up into the air. Another kite entitled "Penguin" had several people hanging on to it for balance.

The gigantic kite "The Carp Jumping Over the Dragon Gate" as high as a three-storey building was designed by Mr. Xie Huiquan, a famous local kite master. Dragon-headed centipede kites were obviously the most popular. The longest "centipede" was composed of 800 sections, totalling 420 metres; the control cords connected to the head were steel wires, each with a diameter of five-six millimetres. It had to be winched up into air and when it was pulled back down, one hundred people were needed to sort out all the cords.

The most fantastic kite was the huge



"Thousand-Hand Goddess of Mercy", which was over 2,000 square metres in size and 320 kilograms in weight. Thus, it beat "The Dragon and Phoenix Auguring Prosperity" and captured the title for size. Four trucks were required to bring it to the competition site, and over four hours were spent on initial on-site preparations. To send the kite up into the air, a truck pulled the front and about one hundred people lifted the back; they succeeded in just one attempt. In addition, there was also a group of 12 large kites resembling fighters aeroplanes, called "Fighters Flying High". With the accompaniment of simulated sound, the "fighters" took off, and attacked the enemy aircraft.... While watching these spectacular kites, I wondered what more the people of Weifang could show to their visitors.

A Giant Bird Kite Sent Sheep Scurrying

Fuyan Hill was another competition site. Various types of Weifang kites were all vying for the most glamorous position in the sky. The most conspicuous were dragon-headed centipede kites in every size and colour imaginable. The longest of them stretched several hundred metres and had to be sent up section by section, starting with the tail. The smallest was only 10 centimetres long. There were kites even smaller than that — a group of three small purple swallows could be put into a match box. It is reported that their manufacturer had to use a magnifying glass to make them.

In the category of traditional kites, the

hard-winged ones are represented by the tri-colour block-printed kites made in Yangjiabu, which feature historical and legendary figures, such as "Liu Hai (a legendary young lad) Playing with the Golden Toad" and "Bao Zheng (a righteous judge in the Song court) Taking Office". Soft-winged ones are modelled on birds, insects and other animals, such as eagles, butterflies, golden fish, dragonflies and cicadas, and were extremely vivid. Superb quality materials create kites with wings that flutter, eyes that move and that fly with genuine sounds, making it hard for spectators to tell the difference between kites and real birds and insects.

During the competition, a legendary giant bird kite dived down from the sky at the very same time as a flock of sheep happened to pass nearby. The "bird" looked so real that it frightened the sheep badly; they all scurried away, and a few even collapsed on the ground. As the shepherd was angry and raised his whip to beat the "bird", the man flying the kite pulled the cords in a hurry and up went the kite again. Everyone except the shepherd cheered.

Some traditional kites, such as the "Thunder God," "Young Lad with a Crane," "The Three Stars of Luck, Officialdom and Longevity" and "Palace Lantern," have been imbued with new meaning and had sound equipment installed. One particularly interesting kite was a tube-shaped kite, which could be folded up and placed into a bamboo tube of only six centimetres in diameter. Most of the kites in the competition were modern designs that combined the strong points of the traditional types.

"Fish and Water" was a unique kite that combined a hard board skeleton with soft wings to enhance the impression of the fish swimming in flowing blue waters. Another kite, the "Monkey King Demonstrates 72

1. Local middle school students on the kite flying ground
2. A young girl setting off her dragon-headed centipede kite
3. The British delegation showing their work
4. The gigantic "Spring Swallow" (by Song Weidong)



top, and down the slopes of the hill — crowds of people were flying kites everywhere. The top of the hill seemed like an island amidst the sea of kites. All together 58 kite flying teams from 36 countries and regions around the world had gathered here, all busy preparing their own home-made kites for flight.

Suddenly, a thunderous rumbling sound, very similar to a jet plane taking off, buzzed overhead. Cautiously looking up, I saw the sparrow hawk kite called "Symphony in the Sky" built by the Nantong team. Watching while making my way across the grounds, I nearly stumbled over the maze of criss-

One of the more sensational kites that day was "The Swallows of Weifang". It was composed of 156 images of beautiful fashion models. Spreading 314 metres in length, it looked like a celestial beauty contest. The "King of Kites" was from Holland. In the shape of a huge umbrella, this grand kite was over 570 square metres in size and linked to several nylon cables each as thick as a fist. An electric apparatus was brought in to





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1. Two Malaysian women flying their kite
2. A statue of Lu Ban, the legendary carpenter and founder of Chinese kites
3. The Weifang Kite Museum (by Chapman Lee)
4. The 314-metre long fashion kite
5. Tigers walking in the sky



AN AUSTRALIAN WOMAN MARRIES IN CHINA



Photos & article by Xie Guanghui

Majia rises earlier than usual today. Happiness is written all over her face as she ambles to the dinner table placed in front of her mountain inn. She covers it with a tablecloth of batik design, and places a vase with flowers on it. Her husband, Xia Shanchuan, and their three children are asleep. A couple of honeymooners from Sweden are still in bed, as are a group of Japanese students. The BBC radio news programme has yet to begin. Majia sits down, nursing a mug of coffee, and she casts her eyes over the steep

mountains on both sides of the Hutiao (Tiger-Jumping) Gorge. In the distance, a ribbon-like caravan trail, the only access to the outside world, hangs like a waistband on some rocky prominences.

A SINGLE JOURNEY CHANGES HER LIFE FOREVER

A year ago, when Majia was about to finish her studies in Yunnan University, she joined some of her fellow foreign students on a trip to the Hutiao Gorge. She did not know at the time that this journey would change the course of her life forever.

It was late when Majia and her companions arrived at the mountain inn. Everyone was dog-tired from the day's long journey. Worse still, there happened to be a power failure that night. A gloomy atmosphere prevailed over the new arrivals. Majia was sitting where she sits now, when an exuberant Xia emerged from the house. Delighted by the appearance of so many guests, the inn keeper asked his eldest daughter to get the rooms ready, his second daughter to wash vegetables and prepare supper, and his youngest daughter to light the candles on the dinner table. He served his guests a kind of aromatic coffee produced in Yunnan, all the while asking, in fluent English, what food they cared for. Fried rice, pancakes, vegetable salad, pork steak, or beer... Majia was amazed, for she had not expected that in the backwaters of these mountains anyone could communicate in English. Raising her head, she was shocked by what she saw. In the candlelight the inn keeper, a plate of porcelain mugs balanced on his wrist, served coffee to everybody with the flourish of an acrobat. Fulfilling Majia's request, Xia deftly pinned a bottle of Coca-Cola to his chest, removed the lid, and placed the drink before her. Suddenly Majia saw the reason why: the man was handicapped — his fingers were deformed so badly that his hand looked like a chunk of dough.

ENGLISH TUTORING IN LIEU OF LODGING FEES

Majia told her companions what she had learned. And the guests began bombarding Xia with a barrage of questions: Were you born with your hand looking like this, or was this caused by a disease? Where did you learn your English? Where is your wife?

"It is a long story," Xia replied, drawing out a stool and sitting down. According to him, when he was a three-year-old child he had fallen down from his bed and landed in a brazier. His hand was burned and deformed as a result. "It is tough for a man with a physical handicap like mine to survive in this mountainous area," he said. "I opened a tiny store in 1983. In 1986, when the Hutiao Gorge was opened to foreign visitors, I set aside a house and opened an inn in it. Many of my guests were foreign students studying in China, so instead of charging for their lodging, I asked them to teach me English — that's how I learned to speak English."

A few years earlier, his wife went off with a friend to work in the city, and she never returned.

"The kids were small then," he said, caressing the hair of his seven-year-old daughter. "To run this inn and serve the tourists is the only thing I know how to do. Last year, just to expand my business I borrowed more

than 10,000 yuan from fellow villagers and had a few new rooms added to my inn. I hope that some day I can also open a restaurant or a bar." His listeners were moved by his story, and regarded him as something of a hero. Before they left the following day, everyone voluntarily paid US\$10, 10 times the usual room rate.

LOVE LETTERS BRING TWO HEARTS CLOSER

After Majia returned to Kunming, she found her mind often



When Majia married Xia in June, 1997 she became the only foreign wife in the area.

drifting to the inn keeper she had met while visiting Hutiao Gorge. She did not know what was it about the man that was tugging at her heart. Was it his misfortune in life, or his unyielding spirit in the face of adversity? In her loving heart she felt the man needed a woman to help him lick the wounds of his soul. "I cannot forget my journey to Hutiao Gorge, and I want to come to see you again by myself," she wrote in a long letter to him. Revealing her innermost feelings, she continued, "From the bottom of my heart I adore you, and I have planned to remain in China after my graduation from college."

The letter tossed Xia into a mental turmoil. "Will she really marry me, a handicapped man with three kids? Am I asking for more than I deserve?" Despite his doubts, the Australian woman had rekindled his desire for love. When Majia was preparing for her second journey to Hutiao Gorge the news came that a massive landslide and cave-ins had damaged the road leading in. She was forced to give up her plan. This, however, unveiled a romantic period between them, with letters serving



Majia has become a part of the tourist attraction in Hutiao Gorge.

Majia and Xia listen to the radio broadcast every day in order to summarise the international news for their guests.



as messengers of love. By the time the road was opened to traffic once again, Majia already had her hands full preparing for her final exams, and she had no alternative but to postpone her journey once again.

'I COULDN'T RECOGNISE YOU EVEN IF I BUMPED INTO YOU'

Xia could not put up with the separation any more. He wanted to see Majia immediately. He took the bus to Kunming, and as he reached Yunnan University, it was near lunch time. He looked up the list of overseas students, but could not find her name, neither could he find her in the dormitory. Loitering on the tranquil and heavily wooded campus, Xia recalled every passionate letter Majia had written him. In his mind's eye he could clearly see the crooked Chinese characters she wrote, but he could not tell what she looked like — that day there were so many guests around, he had not paid any particular attention to her. He surmised that even if he had bumped into her he could not recognise her. In his disappointment he headed for the front gate of the university. In the doorman's room, he spotted a familiar face. In the woman's hand he saw the letter he had mailed the week before. Xia's heart missed a beat.

"How come you are here?" Majia said, equally surprised.

"I don't know why..." Xia muttered. He was somewhat dazed as he fumbled for words. "I...I...just felt like coming."

"How nice to see you. I'm so glad," Majia said in an excited voice.

"Why aren't you staying on the campus?"

"Oh, I graduated last week, and I've moved out. Had I not come to fetch my mail, I wouldn't have met you. God blesses us!"

Xia, worried about his three children, wanted to catch the night bus home. Majia walked him to the bus station. "If you agree, I think I'll tell my parents about us," Majia said. Shyness was palpable in her brown eyes. Xia hugged her in immense joy, but in his heart he had grave doubts. "Do I deserve all this?"

The bus driver was tooting his horn impatiently. Just before the two lovers bade good-bye to each other, Majia said she wanted to come to visit Xia in a week's time. He promised to greet her at the local bridge.

'DID SHE CHANGE HER MIND?' After the seven long days were over, Xia rented two horses and made for the bridge early in the morning. He waited until three in the afternoon. But after all the buses due from Kunming that day had come and gone, Majia was nowhere to be seen. "Did she



Majia and Xia hope more tourists will come to Hutiao Gorge.

change her mind? Perhaps her parents did not want their daughter to marry a handicapped man. Or they simply did not want to marry her to anyone in China at all." Xia was engrossed in his thoughts when Majia turned up as if by magic. It turned out that the previous night she had taken the wrong bus, which brought her to Lijiang. Much time was wasted while she was making a detour of nearly 100 kilometres.

A WEDDING PICTURE FOR HER PARENTS This time Majia stayed with Xia for two days. She got along well with his three daughters, teaching them English, preparing Western food for them, and climbing the mountains and picking wild flowers with them. She and Xia then went together to Kunming for a marriage certificate. A local photo studio offered to shoot their wedding picture as a gift. For Majia this was a marvellous stroke of luck since her parents and siblings could not come to her wedding; by mailing her wedding picture to them they could all share in her joy.

SHE WANTED TO BEAR HIS CHILD Deep in her heart, she wanted so much to bear her husband's child. But Xia had already had three children, and it went against government policy for him to have a fourth child. Majia had no alternative — she had to be satisfied with three stepdaughters. To her great delight, the children get along very well with her. She has already planned to send the youngest daughter to study in Australia.

From upstairs comes a flurry of footsteps — her three stepdaughters have got up and are coming downstairs. The BBC international news programme is to begin in 30 minutes and she wants to compile a news bulletin for her guests. A new day has just begun.

Translated by Ling Yuan

A World of Strange Rocks

Photo & Article by Xie Jianbo



In Zhangpu County, Fujian Province, there are two neighbouring peninsulas — Gulei and Liu'ao. Clusters of strange rocks dominate their long beaches, creating unique Southern Fujian seaside scenery.

I had always thought that it was only in rivers and creeks that pebbles with beautiful grains could be found. Now I have learned that the seashore on Gulei Peninsula is full of such pebbles, making it difficult to decide whether one should call the place a sand beach or a pebble beach. Caressed by the gentle sea waves, the small colourful pebbles reflect the dazzling rays of the setting sun. One looks like a recreation of the scenery of Mount Huangshan, and the next presents the image of the rabbit in the moon.

The moment after the wave recedes is the best time to pick the most attractive pebbles. Even rather ordinary-looking ones seem to change their appearance thanks to the sea water which moistens them and makes them transparent with inner patterns. Just use your imagination and sense of appreciation to examine every grain and every shade of the colours of the pebbles and you will find their individual values. I had never been a pebble lover, but I could not resist the temptation to pick up one stone in the shape of a pure heart. Perhaps this spelt the beginning of my hobby of stone collection.

The Singing Rocks

Raising one's eyes from pebbles, one is greeted by a scene of rows of sea rocks. Unlike the smooth, round and delicate pebbles, these rocks of different materials present all kinds of strange shapes after ages of washing and corrosion by the sea water. Taking a stroll on the beach barefooted to view the strange rocks gives one the pleasure of having the feet massaged and the eyes feasted at the same time.

At one end of the beach stands a rock in the shape of a tortoise on what is left of the small hill resulting from the washing and beating of the sea waves. It seems the rock animal is looking intently out to sea with its neck stretching out as if searching or waiting for something. The rock is so vividly shaped that visitors cannot help exclaiming: "Wow! Look at the tortoise!" At any moment, the waves underneath it may begin to surge. This has prompted people to name





the sight "Tortoise Viewing the Waves".

On Gulei Peninsular, what is most common are the honeycomb rocks whose strange appearance generates fear. However, they have their special charm. The holes absorb huge amount of sea water when the waves rise. When they begin to expel air, they create melodious music, thus earning the name Rocks of Symphony.



'Highland Scenery' on the Beach

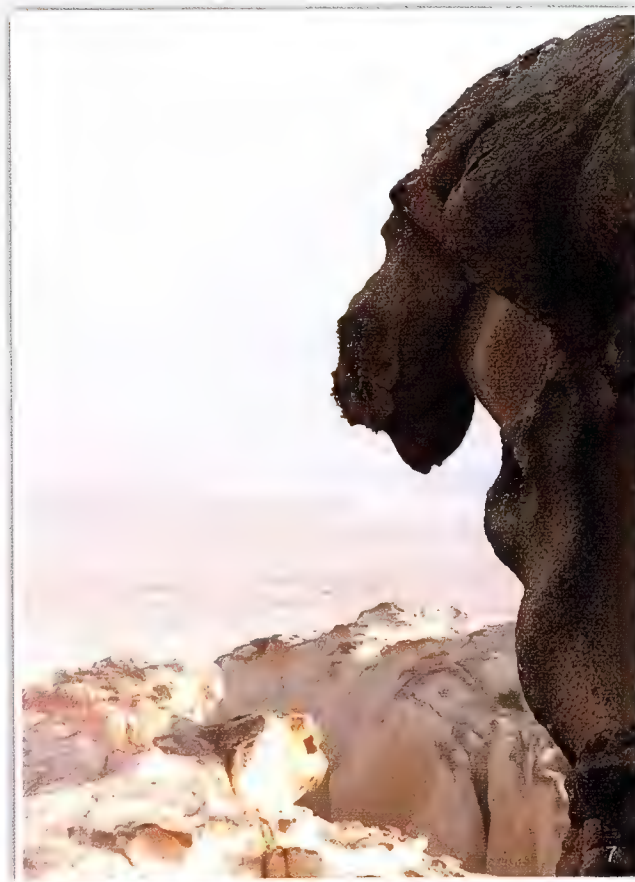
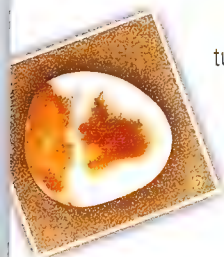
On our return trip, we visited Liu'ao Peninsula. We turned right at Shanwei Road and came to Liu'ao after travelling for 20 kilometres. Here the Tiger Head Hill is crowned by a fair-sized Fly-over Rock. Seeing the stone standing in such a delicate position, several young men began to try to push it off its stand.

Indeed, the job seemed so easy that when one of the young men tried to move the rock with his shoulder, the rock began to rise at one end as if it were about to fall down. He tried several times but failed at each attempt. If the rock had not had its own trick of staying where

it was, it would have been pushed into the sea a long time ago.

On the east coast of the central section of Liu'ao Peninsular stands Laoya Hill. It is so tiny that it cannot be found even on the Zhangzhou city map. Its anonymity, however, cannot conceal its beauty. The hill is the best vantage point for viewing the rock scenery of the peninsula. From a distance, it seems to be a hard, bare rock without any vegetation. What it has are soft yellowish rocks and stones corroded by the wind and the sea. After being blown by the wind and beaten by the waves for ages, it has been left with ditches and ridges, each presenting a magnificent sight on their own. But when we approached the hill, we found ourselves in the land of yellow earth which can only be found in North China.


1. A miniature Yellow Loess highland scene
2. Won't this pure heart arouse your love of pebbles?
3. Sea Lions Viewing the Moon at Laoya Hill on Liu'ao Peninsular
4. The tree branches and glowing sky on this pebble reminds one of the beautiful scenery at Mount Huangshan.
5. The rabbit in the moon is dimly visible on this pebble.
6. The land of yellow earth at Laoya Hill
7. Dog Looking for Food





Stone Animals

The sea waves' tireless shaping of the hard rocks has brought forth clusters of naturally carved stone animals on the seashore. At Laoya Hill, a site known as Sea Lions Viewing the Moon shows a charming sea lion couple. Dog Looking for Food seems to be a dog with its head pointing down, looking intently at some delicacy below. The Hatching Duck resembles a small duck sitting on top of a huge egg. Though its body is not large enough to shield the rock, it seems to be doing its hatching job with such sincerity that the scene really brings out the nature of mother ducks. Also there are shale formations looking like piles of paper, huge mushrooms, and many other shapes. The locals proudly refer to all these rocks as Liu'ao Rocks. If you use your imagination, you will not fail to make new discoveries on your trip to Liu'ao Peninsula.

Visitors who have seen Laoya Hill on Liu'ao Peninsula agree that "unless one has been to Laoya, one has not been to Liu'ao." 



Tips for the Traveller

- **Transportation:** Take a ferry at Xiamen Harbour and in half an hour, you will arrive at Yuzaiwei Wharf. Change to a bus or a car, which drives past Fotan, Chihu, Shanwei and Duxun to Gulei. The trip is about 100 kilometres. On your return trip, turn right at Shanwei Road, and you will find Liu'ao after a drive of 20 kilometres.
- **Accommodation:** Xiamen Hotel, 16 Huyuan Road, Xiamen City;
Egret Hotel, 6 Huyuan Road, Xiamen City;
Xinqiao Hotel, 444 Zhongshan Road, Xiamen City;
Huadu Hotel, 819 Xiale Road, Xiamen City.
- **Food:** Xiamen has a wide range of local delicacies. Most typical ones include seafood jelly, fried spicy oysters, seafood soup, peanut soup and green onion-flavoured pancakes, which can all be easily found in food stands along the streets.



Ningbo_

A Vibrant City by the East China Sea

Photos by Shi Baoxiu Article by Gloria Shang



The city of Ningbo has been known by various features. Some love it because of its prevailing ancient cultural atmosphere; some are curious about it because in its suburbs lies Chiang Kai-shek's hometown; and others hold the idea that it is home to smart merchants – a result of their own encounters with natives of this area.... All claims are true, each reflecting a distinct facet of Ningbo.

Lying on the coast of East China Sea, in East China's Zhejiang Province, Ningbo has been a port city throughout its long history. Foreign trade started here as early as the Tang Dynasty (618-907). The city took

shape in the late years of the Tang, its city walls first built in 821. After the Opium War of 1840, it became one of the five Chinese ports first open to Western powers. Over a century later, in the 1980s, Ningbo was once again swept into prominence in its relations with the outside world – it became one of 14 privileged coastal cities with preferential policies for opening up and receiving foreign investment.

The city's jurisdiction covers an area of 9,365 square kilometres, including the urban area and six satellite cities and counties. Ningbo has a total population of 5.2 million, of whom about one-fifth are urban city dwellers.

Brilliant Hedumu Culture

Ningbo is the origin of the brilliant Hedumu Culture, which, like those found in northern China, is one of the oldest cultures of the Chinese civilisation.

At Hedumu Village in Yuyao County, 25 kilometres west of Ningbo

City, lies an ancient cultural site dating back 5,000-7,000 years ago. Relics discovered here range widely, from segments of wooden structures to animals' remains, farming tools made of animal bones and whole plants of rice, including roots, leaves and grains. Having been submerged in weakly acidic water, the articles have been

preserved — so well that even the veins of leaves, tassels and hairs outside the grain shells remain clearly visible. Discoveries at this site provide proof that as early as 7,000 years ago people living in this area had begun farming and the cultivation of rice.

A Cradle of Talent

While roaming through Ningbo's streets and lanes, one will be immersed in an ancient cultural atmosphere. One object that gives the traveller the feeling of going back to history is the Ming-dynasty building Tianyige (A Tower of Heaven) — a private library!

Tianyige is the oldest existing private library building in China, and one of the three oldest in the world. The building was constructed during the period of 1561-1566 in the Ming Dynasty by Fan Qin, vice-minister of defence, as his own study. The two-storey tower has six rooms on the first floor and one big room on the second floor. The library was repeatedly praised by the Qing Emperor Qianlong for its wide and unique collection, and consequently, seven copies of the building were built for the rare books listed in the imperial catalogue. The library now holds 300,000 varieties of precious classics, of which 80,000 are rare books and more than 500 are sole existing copies. Among the most valued are the *Local Chronicles and Records of Imperial Examinations* of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), both being unmatched historical documents for studies of their related areas.

Ningbo's citizens have a long history of amassing private collections of books. The first man recorded to have done so was Lou Yu of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). Another person

of the same period, Chen Mi, also took the collection of books as a hobby. With the foundation laid by these two, more book collectors appeared in the following Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties.

The Chinese proverb says that "he who wants to advance 10,000 *li* has to read 10,000 volumes of books". This tradition of book collecting provides a solid foundation for Ningbo's reputation as a cradle of talent. Among the most famous historical figures are Wang Anshi (1021-1086), a prime minister in the Song Dynasty, who served as a county magistrate for three years in the area, and many distinguished Ningbo natives, including Huang Zongyi (1610-1695), a Ming-dynasty





philosopher, historian and educator; Wang Shouren (1472-1528), a philosopher and educator who creatively developed Confucianism; Zhu Zhiyu (1600-1682), a scholar and vanguard in Sino-Japanese cultural exchanges who taught Confucianism in Japan for many years; Yao Xian (1805-1864), an intelligent poet in modern Chinese history; and contemporary master painters Pan Tianshou and Chen Zhifo. Even today, in the cultural circles, it often happens that one hears a promising director, musician or painter declaring that he or she is from Ningbo. It appears that Ningbo has indeed provided rich cultural nourishment!

A New Port Taking Off

The city, however, is by no means remaining in its cultural past. During China's new long march towards modernization, Ningbo has built its new fame as a garment city and international port.

Ningbo is where both China's first Western-style suit and first Sun Yat-sen suit were tailored, a testimony to the skills of Ningbo tailors who have been highly acclaimed for almost a century. Today, the flourishing garment industry has become a pillar industry of Ningbo, making the city an important clothes production and trade centre in China. Statistics show that 1,275 of China's 30,850 major garment enterprises are located in Ningbo, and each year they produce 11 percent of the nation's total 8

billion pieces of clothes. Furthermore, 30 percent of China's famous brand clothes are produced in this East China Sea city.

Blessed by Mother Nature, Ningbo has a deep-water coastline over 100 kilometres long, which embraces a deep-water area of 270 square metres. Ningbo Port is one of the oldest foreign trade ports in China. But the port one sees today is far beyond its original image both in feature and in business dimension. The new Ningbo Port, which consists of the three ports of Beilun, Zhenhai and Old Port, has 61 berths for ships of 500 tons and greater, 24 of which can accommodate ships of over 10,000 tons. Equipped with all the necessary modern facilities and specialised berths for coal, iron ore, oil, containers and liquid products, the port handles a hundred kinds of goods in 17 categories. In 1997, Ningbo Port handled 82.2 million tons of freight and 5 million passengers, its shipping volume being the second largest in China.

Ningbo is not yet a big metropolis. Nevertheless, if one has a chance to visit its Beilun Port in the morning, and see the cluster of cranes swinging their arms up and down towards the golden sun, one cannot help feeling the great potential of this city. The port now connects with 518 ports in 84 countries. In the near future, when it becomes one of the four major international ports on the mainland of China, as planned, there will be more ships and more cranes to link Ningbo with more ports and more people throughout the world.

Ningbo, with a vibrant history, has a future as broad and as far-reaching as the East China Sea!

Previous page: Yongjiang River Bridge, Ningbo

1. Ningbo is one of China's garment industry centres.
2. Beilun Port is set to become one of the four major international ports in the mainland of China.
3. A department store in downtown Ningbo
4. The city centre of Ningbo sits at the junction of three rivers.
5. The ancient Drum Tower in downtown Ningbo
6. A church over a hundred years old
7. Moon Lake Park veiled in the morning mists





Tour Highlights of Ningbo

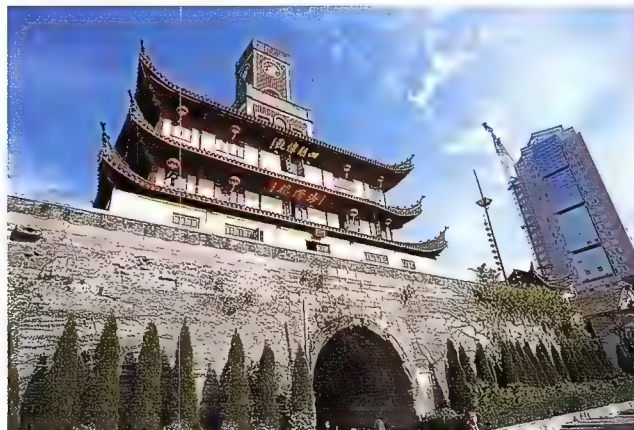
Ningbo's colourful history has left it a rich cultural legacy. In Ningbo, the traveller may feel as if he or she has gone through a time channel — few could have expected to see so many famous ancient buildings, historical sites and Buddhist temples in a commercial city like Ningbo. Meanwhile, one will also find oneself facing irresistible enticement from Ningbo's picturesque scenery and progressive energy.

The city has a flourishing tourism industry. In 1997, Ningbo received 4.5 million Chinese and foreign tourists, adding 3.6 billion yuan (about US\$450 million) in revenue. Backed by its plentiful hotels and convenient transport, various special tours are organised to meet tourists' demands.

Historical Sites

Tianyige (A Tower of Heaven)

Located on Maya Street on the west bank of the Moon Lake, this magnificent building was a private library of a Ming-dynasty official Fan Qin. It is the oldest existing library building in China. Behind the imposing two-storey main structure is Zunjing Pavilion and a stone tablet forest. In front of the library is a pond surrounded by man-made hills in the shape of nine lions and an elephant. Stored in the library are more than 300,000 varieties of books, including some very precious single-copy historical documents.



Haishu Tower

Located at the southern end of Park Road, Haishu Tower used to be the south gate of the Tang-dynasty city wall which was constructed in 821. The wall is eight metres high, and the gate is six metres wide and 16 metres deep. Following a staircase on its northeast, the visitor can go up the ancient wall. The city wall has gone through many

renovations. As a drum was added during a major renovation in 1855, Haishu Tower became more popularly known as Drum Tower.

Tianfeng Pagoda

Located in the city centre, Tianfeng Pagoda used to be a spot where ancient men of letters liked to gather and write poems and prose. The original hexagonal pagoda, 60 metres tall, was built during the Tang Dynasty (618-907); it was repeatedly dismantled and reconstructed. The present version was built according to a silver model of the Tianfeng Pagoda, which, made in 1144, was found





among the more than 100 relics discovered in the ruins. When viewed from the outside it seems to be a seven-storey building; the pagoda, however, has seven covert layers and four underground floors, making it altogether 18 storeys.

Tashan Dam

Built in 833 during the Tang Dynasty, this water conservancy project in Jinjiang Town, Jinxian County, is a historical miracle. The dam, totalling 114 metres in length, is 3.05 metres high and 4.8 metres wide. Amazingly, the 1,000-year-old, wood-and-stone structure remains in sound shape and functions perfectly today. During periods of flooding, it disperses 70 percent of the water into the river and lets only 30 percent go to the stream; in the dry season, it reverses the division of water automatically so that farmers can draw enough irrigation water from the stream. The project is a great attraction to engineers and scholars at home and abroad.

Hedumu Cultural Site

Relics excavated from Hedumu Village in Yuyao City prove that the site used to be inhabited 7,000 years ago. The farming tools and rice plants discovered here show that rice cultivation had already begun at that time. Hedumu Cultural Site testifies that, like the Yellow River valley, the Yangtse River valley is also a cradle of Chinese civilisation.

Ancient Temples

Baoguo Temple

This Buddhist temple, located on Lingshan Hill in the north suburb of Ningbo, is the oldest, well-preserved wooden structure in China south of the Yangtse River. This building, almost 1,000 years old, is unique in its architectural style. Its main hall is built without a single nail, and the beam frame is elaborately covered by an exquisitely designed sunken panel and ceiling. Hence its other name – Beamless Hall.

Qita (Seven-Pagoda) Temple

Located in Baizhang Street in the city centre, Qita is one of the four most famous Buddhist pagoda forests in Zhejiang Province. Built 1,100 years ago during the Tang Dynasty, the temple was so named because of the seven pagodas built in front of the temple. Differing from other Buddhist temples in China, which mostly worship Sakyamuni, this temple



enshrines a statue of the Thousand-Hand Goddess of Mercy in its main hall. The temple's halls, pavilions and towers are all built in the magnificent architectural style of the period and decorated with beautiful carvings.

Tiantong Temple

Situated at the foot of Taibai Mountain, 25 kilometres east of the city centre, the 1,600-year-old temple was built during the Western Jin Dynasty (265-316). Included in the grand compound are 20 ancient buildings, including halls, towers, pavilions and living quarters, covering an area of 58,000 square metres.

During its noble days in the Tang Dynasty, Tiantong Temple was widely accepted by pilgrims from Japan and Southeast Asian countries as the Buddhist land of the Chan Sect. The Japanese Caotong Sect regards this temple as its ancestral hall.

Aryuwang (Asoka) Temple

Also situated at the foot of Taibai Mountain, Asoka Temple is 16 kilometres from the city proper of Ningbo. One of the major Chinese Buddhist sanctuaries, the temple was first built in 282 during the Western Jin Dynasty. In the temple's Hall of Sarira, the genuine sarira of Sakyamuni is enshrined. In front of the hall stand a variety of stone steles left from various dynasties.

Scenic Spots

Beilun Port

Beilun Port is situated on the south bank of Hangzhou Bay, 39 kilometres from Ningbo. It is one of the four major deep-water ports in China, with 13 berths for ships of 5,000-20,000 tons.

Xikou Xuedou Mountain Scenic Area

The scenic area lies in Fenghua County, 35 kilometres from Ningbo city centre. Included in its 60 square kilometres are three major tourist spots: Xikou Town, Xuedou Mountain and Tingxia Lake. Xikou is the hometown of Chiang Kai-shek, where tourists can view Chiang's former residence and the tomb of his mother. On Xuedou Mountain, there are the Qianzhangyan Waterfalls and Xuedou Temple, and Tingxia Lake offers various picturesque attractions.

Dongqian Lake

Located in Jinxian County, 15 kilometres from Ningbo city proper,



Dongqian Lake fills an area of 20 square kilometres, four times bigger than the scenic West Lake in Hangzhou. The waters and surrounding hills form a charming scene. In addition there are a series of interesting historical sites and man-made scenic spots, such as Erling Pagoda and Wang Wanshi's Temple. It is an ideal holiday resort equipped with hotels and water sports facilities.

Zhaobao Mountain

This mountain at the mouth of the Yongjiang River leading into the East China Sea is a spot of strategic importance. On the mountain there are Ming-dynasty battlements used to fight naval invaders. At the centre of the mountain top is the Baotuo Temple. There are several other tourist spots, including the Immortal's Cave and Buddhist cliff-surface carvings. From the top of the mountain one can take in the imposing view of the surging East China Sea. At the foot of the mountain lies Beilun Port and the Ningbo Economic and Technological Development Zone.

Nanxi Hot Springs

Nestled in the quiet valley of Tianming Mountain, the resort

is 76 kilometres from Ningbo City. Its hot springs' water is rich in minerals and remains at 47.4 °C all year round. Hotels

and hot spring baths have been built in the area. Coach bus service is available from the city centre of Ningbo to Nanxi Hot Springs.

Special Tours:

The series of special tours include: Highlights of the Big East China Port; Exploring the Secret of the Hedumu Culture; Visits to the Residences of the Famous; Buddhist Worshipping; Experience in an Island Fishing Village; Enjoying the Landscape and Improving Your Health in April; Food and Customs; etc. Tourists who are interested should call a local travel agency for further information.



FOR YOUR REFERENCE

How to Get There

Ningbo can be reached by air from many Chinese cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Shenyang, Dalian, Xi'an, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Xiamen, Wuhan, Kunming and Hong Kong. The airport is 20 kilometres from the city centre. It is also linked with Shanghai and Hangzhou by railways.

Where to Stay

Donggang Hotel **** Tel: (574) 737 3188

Add: 52 Caihong Road North, Ningbo Postcode: 315040

Ningbo Hotel *** Tel: (574) 712 1688

Add: 65 Mayuan Road, Ningbo Postcode: 315010

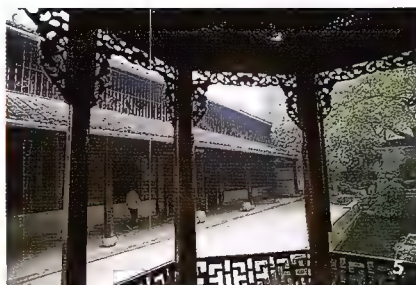
Overseas Chinese Hotel *** Tel: (574) 729 3175

Add: 130 Liuding Street, Ningbo Postcode: 315010

Mingdu Hotel ** Tel: (574) 736 8588

Add: 176-186 Zhongshan Road, Ningbo Postcode: 315000

Xikou Hotel ** Tel: (574) 885 0826



Add: 110 Zhongxing Road West, Xikou Town, Fenghua City Postcode: 315502

Jiulong Mountain Villa ** Tel: (574) 653 0001

Add: Jiulong (Nine-Dragon) Scenic Area, Zhenhai Postcode: 315205

Local Snacks

Ningbo *tangyuan* soup made of glutinous rice flour; Loumaoji spiced dried bean curd; Wufangzhai *zongzi* of glutinous rice wrapped in reed leaves; Zhao Dayou's Cake; and Gangyagou deserts.

Restaurants for Local Delicacies

City God Temple Snack Shop

Tel: 736 1605 Add: 15 Xianxue Street

Zhao Dayou's Cake Shop

Tel: 733 2776 Add: 20 Baizhang Road

Xianheng Restaurant

Tel: 735 6095 Add: 34 Renmin Road

Gangyagou Deserts Shop

Tel: 736 5339 Add: 327 Kaiming Street

Meilongzhen Restaurant

Tel: 736 1573 Add: 69 Zhongshan Road East

Zhuangyuanlou Restaurant

Tel: 736 7468 Add: 2 Yihe Road

Specialities

Wood-and-bone inlaid articles, gold-inlaid wood sculpture, coloured clay sculptures, embroidery works, hand-weave rug, bamboo-and grass-ware.

Major Travel Services

Ningbo Overseas Tourism Company Tel: (574) 729 4451

Add: 8/F Wanghu Building, 2 South Station East Road, Ningbo Postcode: 315010

Ningbo International Travel Service Tel: (574) 731 2805

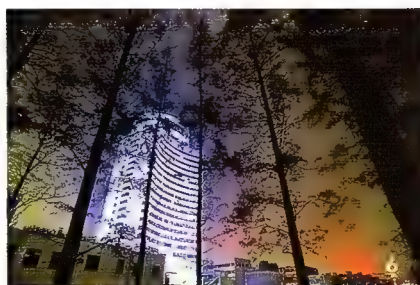
Add: 75 Yanyue Street, Ningbo Postcode: 315010

Ningbo China Travel Service Tel: (574) 732 3385

Add: 70 Mayuan Road Postcode: 315010

Weather

Ningbo has a warm and wet climate with four seasons. Its yearly average temperature is 16.2°C, and is good for tourism all year round.



1. Parade of the traditional Fishing Lanterns Festival
2. Food stalls at the City God Temple
3. Xuedou Mountain Scenic Area where Chiang Kai-shek once retreated
4. Ancient battlements on the top of Zhaobao Mountain
5. Tianyige, the oldest library building in China
6. Jinlong Hotel near the Railway Station in Ningbo





HONG KONG

Photos & article by So Long Chi

A BREAK ON LAMMA ISLAND



I went to Lamma Island to look for relaxation. Boarding a ferry at Central, I landed at Yung Shue Bay. Since no automobiles are allowed on Lamma, the air is fresher, and the buzzing in my ears finally eased...

1. Carefree in a teahouse
2. Lamma Island abounds with flowers and butterflies.
3. Watching the sunset by the sea



Alfresco Cafe

In Hong Kong it is hard to find (and to open) alfresco cafes. Given the limited space and below average air quality in its city centre, it is quite unimaginable to see people sitting relaxed at tables by the roadside plagued by noise and exhaust.

However, here on Lamma Island it is a different story: cars are banned. Just a short journey from Central by ferry, Lamma Island is the place to take refuge from the hectic life of the city centre. On the island you can forget all the hustle and bustle, the noise and the polluted air.

Drop into one of the cafes, find a table, order a cup of Cappuccino and then let your eyes wander. Expatriates and travellers outnumber the locals by far. This is not surprising as Lamma Island has long been famous for its large population of expatriates. Perhaps they find the relaxed atmosphere of the island resembles the scene back home, and so come here to mix with their compatriots to stave off homesickness.

1. A choice of wines for a relaxed weekend
2. A roadside bar
3. Watching flowers and butterflies on the way
4. A corner of the Bookworm cafe

HAVING A CUP OF CAPPUCCINO AT AN OUTDOOR TABLE

Bookworm Cafe

A short walk along Yung Shue Wang



Street leads to Bookworm, a bookstore cafe. The premises offer both mental and physical refreshments. You can bury yourself in a book while at the same time enjoying foods of local flavour. The interior design renders the place an atmosphere of a cafe in the 1960s.

The owner had seen bookstore cafes in her travels overseas and wondered why we didn't have them in Hong Kong. When she returned home, she opened one here. The library has a wide selection of books, from the classics to the latest releases as well as periodicals (including Hong Kong China Tourism), which are open to readers free. Quite a number of devoted clients even contribute their books to the library. Second-hand books are on sale at half price.

Scenic Views from the Peak

Hung Shing Ye Bay is a wide beach with fine sand, clear water and comprehensive tourist facilities. The beach is always filled with swimmers and sunbathers, old and young, Chinese and foreigners. When hours in the sun make your mouth and throat dry, and you crave for something to relieve your thirst, try the soft bean curd soup sold at the entrance of the road.

A 20-minute climb up a concrete path through a forest brings you to a small peak. The pavilion there affords a 180° panoramic view of the surroundings: Hung Shing Ye Bay, Cheung Chau Island, piers packed with yachts, Mt. Stenhouse (Shan Tei Tong), and a



BUTTERFLIES AND FLOWERS ALL THE WAY

Lamma Island abounds in flowers, butterflies and bees. Though they are not rare varieties, they are a pleasant distraction and draw visitors like a magnet. Sometimes children are bewildered and gape at the butterflies and, driven by curiosity, reach out their hands for their tiny acquaintances only to be startled by the insects as they suddenly take flight. Almost at the same moment, rumours spread that a humming bird has been spotted and everyone rushes to the spot of discovery and starts clicking their cameras away.





MANY PEOPLE, CHINESE, FOREIGNERS, OLD AND YOUNG, ARE SUNNING ON THE BEACH



power station are all within sight. The sea is a gorgeous deep blue. The motor boats are making waves in aimless fun.

Kamikaze Cave

On the way to Sok Kwu Wan (Picnic Bay) along a hillside path, you will encounter many rock caves. One at Lo So Shing is called Kamikaze Cave. It is completely dark inside. Curious about its depth, I shout into it and my voice echoes for some time. The cave is at least 30 metres deep, I guess.

A local tells me that the cave was dug by the Japanese army during its occupation of Hong Kong during World War II. It was a hide-out for its Kamikaze troops (hence its name), who had intended to launch a sudden suicide attack on the Allied Forces. The choice of location had been well calculated, as Lo So Shing is at the bottleneck of Lamma Island. Nevertheless, the War ended before the invaders could carry out their plan. Now the cave serves as a reminder of the Japanese occupation.

Further on my journey I reached the Tin Hau (Goddess of Sea) Temple. Even today the archaeologists cannot pinpoint the age of the temple because the relics around its foundation differ in age by a wide margin — from 1826 to 1896.

At Sok Kwu Wan (Picnic Bay), there are a dozen or so seafood stalls. This is the reason for its fame and consequently it is packed on every holiday. Travellers to Lamma Island should take the opportunity to try out the varied dishes.



Translated by Winston Yau

1. To each her own fun
2. Father and daughter
3. Surfing — as seen from the hill top
4. Souvenirs sold on street stands at Yung Shue Wan
5. The crystal clear water at Lo So Shing

TIPS FOR THE TRAVELLER

Transport: At the ferry pier for outlying islands in Central, ferries depart for Yung Shue Bay and So Kwu Bay (phone enquiry: 2542 3801). There are also ferries running between Aberdeen and Mo Tat Bay and So Kwu Bay (phone enquiry: 2982 8225).

Time: Start the journey from Central or Aberdeen in the early morning. A full day trip is recommended.

Elevation: A difference of 50 metres in altitude from Yung Shue Bay to So Kwu Bay.

Path conditions: All paths are clear and it is easy walking throughout. Suitable for family outings.

Food: There are restaurants and food stalls at So Kwu Bay, Hung Shing Ye Bay and Yung Shue Bay.



FIVE BEACHES

The very irregular shape of the Lamma Island endows it with dozens of fine beaches. Some are a fair distance away from the main areas, and thus are quite secluded. Following is a profile on some recommended beaches:

Hung Shing Ye Bay: a beach with fine sand and clear water as well as comprehensive facilities. It is easily accessible.

Lo So Shing: a small and secluded beach with clear water. Facing west, the beach is an ideal place to watch sunset.

Mo Tat Bay: It is the first stop of the ferry from Aberdeen. Although the beach there is not an ideal resort, fishing at the pier is a welcome alternative.

Shek Pai Bay: Lying in the remote south, this beach boasts the most beautiful scenery and the cleanest water. A long line of rocks stretching right out into the sea provides a great vantage point for anglers.

Sham Wan Bay: Situated south of, and separated by the Yuen Kok peninsula from Shek Pai Bay, the bay offers fine white sand and clear water.



Tibetan Christians

in a Yunnan Village

Photos & Article by Jim Goodman

It is Sunday morning on a small plateau above a roaring river. The village folk are out in their fields, ploughing with oxen, beating dry clods or hoeing furrows. The sun has just crept above the hills that tower over the opposite bank. Its rays first strike the tallest building — the church at the north end of the village — before gradually spraying all the fields. Then people shoulder their tools and lead their oxen home, grab their rosaries and begin walking over the stony paths to their house of worship, filing inside at 10:00 a.m. for the service. It's a scene that regularly occurs at sundry sites throughout the world, hardly worth noticing but for one surprising element: the congregation is nearly all Tibetan.

We are in Cizhong Village, on the right bank of the upper Mekong (called Lancang River in China) in the Dêqên Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, in the northwest corner of Southwest China's Yunnan Province. The residents are mostly Tibetan, with a few households of Naxi or Han. To its south are villages of the Naxi, and further beyond, the Lisu. But from here to the north, east and west, except for one Naxi settlement, the inhabitants are Tibetan, part of the Khambas of southeastern Tibet. In Cizhong and its neighbour Cikou, a few kilometres south, Christianity has been the popular religion for over a hundred years.

Western Missionary Endeavours

The story actually began in 1852, when an intrepid young missionary named Père Renou arrived in Yunnan and headed for its northwest corner, reaching Dongzhulin, a Khamba monastery two-

thirds of the way from Zhongdian to Dêqên. There the young priest, disguised as a Chinese merchant, befriended the head lama and stayed several months to learn the local dialect of Tibetan. Perhaps he was also aware of the history of Western missions in Tibet. The French had been trying since 1707, finally giving up in 1748, then trying one last time in 1846, to make a base among the Tibetans. But no



missionary, French or otherwise, could make any claim to success.

Yet Père Renou and his little band of hardy priests managed to erect churches in several Tibetan villages. Besides Cikou, near Cizhong, where a Catholic church replaced the local monastery in 1867, French missions existed at Dêqên (then called Atuntse), Ya-ko-lo (now known as Yanjing), and Batang. However loyal their flocks proved to be, though, life beyond the Mission was still rather risky for their priests. In 1881 Père Brueux of Ya-ko-lo was murdered in a case never solved. Six years later an armed Tibetan uprising led to the burning down of Mission churches in Batang, Dêqên and Ya-ko-lo, plus the desecration of Père Brueux's grave. In 1905 the Tibetans rose anew, laying waste to Chinese-made buildings and signs of foreign influence, such as the church at Cikou, where they killed the two French priests.

However, within a few years the priests were back. Taking a look at the burnt shell of the Cikou church they decided to erect a new one at Cizhong, a bigger village a few kilometres north. This is the last settlement on the upper Mekong where rice can be cultivated and as such is the southernmost extent of the Tibetan people. In 1909 the priests called upon their Tibetan converts to begin construction of a new house of worship. It was completed in 1921, with a garrison of 30 Chinese soldiers to keep the marauders at bay. Government protection ended in 1949. The last French priest had left the year before. The church survived relatively intact and remains today as the last evidence of an unsung but moderately



successful attempt to bring Christianity to the Tibetans.

Since 1995 visitors from Christian countries have been able to go to Cizhong, albeit only when landslides don't block transit for days at a time.

Chanting Christian Texts in Tibetan

Cizhong's church plays a material role as well as a spiritual one. It is host to an orphanage school which is housed in the same courtyard. Few of these children attend Sunday services, however. Inside the church I counted around 25 females and 15 males, mostly elderly, probably similar to what one would count in a remote village church in France. Only a few of the children joined the adults for the last half hour or so.

The congregation first gathered on the church steps to chat before services began. I was summoned to meet the rector and, as I approached, I wondered which language I should try here. The local Tibetan dialect, which I'd been playing with for several days? Naxi, but would it be like Lijiang's? Or Chinese, the one I knew the best? I had underestimated Mission influence. "Parlez-vous francais?" asked the rector. At last I could speak with a local in a language the "guide" didn't know. As it turned out, the rector had good reason to be pleased with the government, for it was responsible for declaring the church an historical monument, making it eligible for maintenance funds.

Certainly the church is in good shape nowadays. The long interior houses three altars: the central one to Jesus, the left to Mary and Child, the right to Joseph and Child. Indoors the architecture is European and the decoration Tibetan. Great archways stand at either side of the pews of the central altar, while above this is a panelled ceiling. Yet the figures filling the spaces between the arches and the ceiling, as well as on the ceiling itself, are the things one sees in the great monasteries of the prefecture — butterflies, lotus flowers, yin-yang symbols and dragons. Without a resident priest, Sunday services are reduced to lighting candles and incense and reciting Christian texts translated into Tibetan. Sometimes the faithful chant like lamas, at other times they sing in groups. In this case it was *De Profundis* and *Cantique au Saint Coeur*, printed generations ago with the Gregorian chant of the original. The recitation lasted over two hours, after

which the parishioners posed with their rosaries, delighted at our interest in them. Perhaps they saw us as fellow Christians. A short while after the services, a young man who apparently heard I had spoken French to the rector came up to ask me if we were "the French coming back". I thought he meant "are you French?" I apologised for not being the French, but told him that I understood his predicament. It's been a long time since Cizhong had a proper Mass.

Unique Plateau Setting for a Christian Village

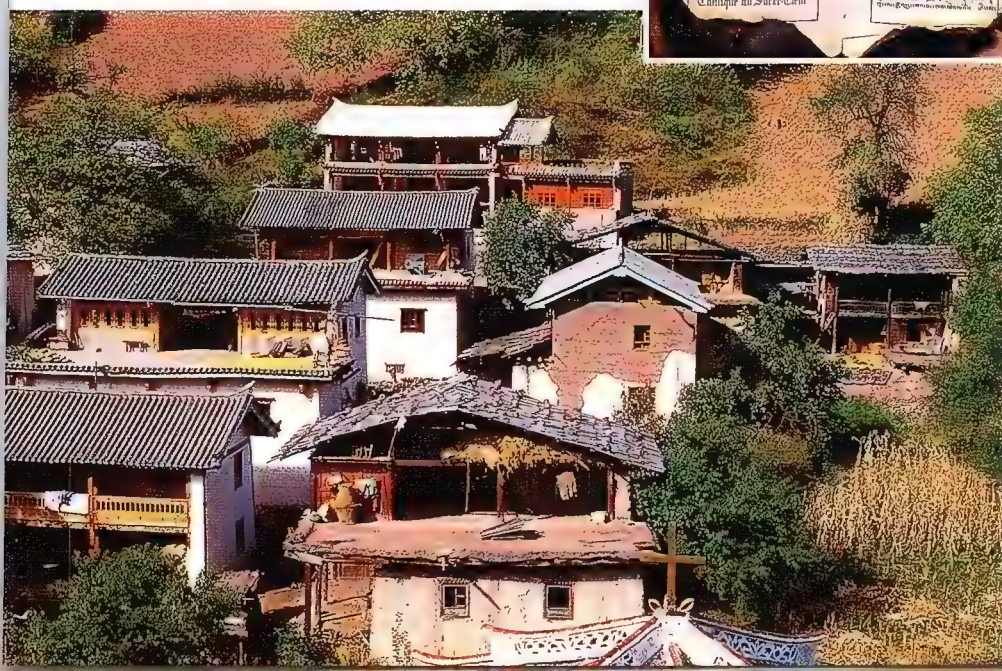
Dêqên lies on the southeastern corner of the Tibetan Plateau, though it is within the provincial boundaries of Yunnan. The county is very mountainous and is home to the highest peak in the province — the 6,740-metre high Meili Snow Mountain. The town itself sits in a valley 3,500 metres above sea level and aside from a lively market. The nearest monastery lies several kilometres north, near a viewpoint for the snow mountains.

Given a clear day, certainly the best time to view the snow peaks is early morning, when dawn has lightened the sky behind the mountains and suddenly the sunlight paints the peaks. Meili gets the first light, but it is merely the tallest, northernmost peak of a group of snow mountains above the upper Mekong west of Dêqên. Taizi Snow Mountain, at 6,054 metres, is the southernmost peak. Lesser peaks stand between, while tumbling down from Meili is the region's most accessible glacier.

Meili and Taizi are lost to view upon returning to Dêqên, but reappear over the gorges cut by tributary streams of the Lancang River. About 20 kilometres south of Dêqên the road passes through the first of three short tunnels, from the last of which the Lancang River is first visible. From here to the settlement of Yunling the river makes eight distinct bends, the snow peaks gradually no longer

visible. From here to Cizhong the road follows the river. Occasionally streams and waterfalls on the opposite bank slice through steep cliffs and monasteries perch precariously on knolls just above the river. Here and there a group of prayer slabs and a wooden post, perhaps with a sacrificial animal skull

at its base, indicates the site of a fatal accident. Traffic on the road is light, though, consisting mainly of groups of mountaineers with a small herd of pack animals.



1. Parishioners leave the church after Sunday service.
2. Having a last puff before entering the church
3. The original translation of *Cantique au saint Coeur*
4. Houses in Cizhong Village



Beihai, Guangxi

Xie Guanghui

Where can you find a beach with clear water and soft sand to enjoy yourself in the summer? Our next issue's **HIGHLIGHTS** will introduce you to **Beihai in Guangxi** and the wonderful scenic spots there. Ever heard of building a house with only several thousand dollars and a pick? **DISCOVERIES** will bring you all the way up to the Loess Plateau in northern China to visit **the cave dwellers** for an enlightening experience.



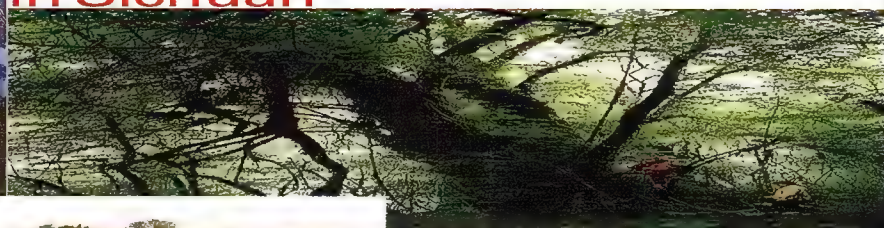
The Cave Dwellers

Shan Xiaogang



The Hailuo Gully in Sichuan

Huang Yunsheng



It is refreshing to visit a glacier in summer, because you can stay away from the heat on the one hand and broaden your horizons on the other. Our **LANDSCAPES** recommends the beautiful **Hailuo Gully Glacier in Sichuan**. Rebecca Lee, who has already explored the two poles, faces another challenge – passing through the “Sea of Death” by **drifting on the Hotan River**.



Drifting on the Hotan River

Rebecca Lee

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